

VISUAL STRATEGY:

The Strategic Use of Images in Communication Campaigns

JULIA HUNTER RANCONI

Master of Arts, Strategic Communication

University of Minnesota

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Julia Hunter Rancone is an Account Supervisor at Ultra Creative, a design agency in Northeast Minneapolis that specializes in packaging design and Integrated Marketing Communication visuals. Visual design has always been an integral part of her life – from visiting museums and attending art classes when she was younger, to graduating from Whitman College with her B.A. in Art History and Visual Culture, to working in her current profession. Over the last few years, her interest in design has spread to an interest in consumer response and how combined, these areas lead to persuasive visual communication. The visual design work at Ultra Creative paired with the M.A. in Strategic Communication has been the perfect combination to inform and educate the ways in which visuals can be used to a purpose.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper examines the role of visuals and how they can be incorporated within the discipline of strategic communication to move design from a subjective, aesthetic space to an objective, strategic space that influences outcomes. An in-depth look at semiology, visual rhetoric, and consumer-object relations articulates how brands can – and should – use visual strategy in strategic communications campaigns as a method of persuasion. The aim of the paper is to create a framework around how visuals are understood and evaluated to communicate to a purpose. The research question is: How can brands use design as a strategic communication tool at consumer touch points to persuade consumers in their choice of goods? Three primary research studies were conducted to evaluate the research question: An online qualitative survey to measure the shared communicative beliefs of visuals on packaging; an in-person questionnaire to test the effectiveness of visual metaphor in print advertising; and in-depth interviews with experts in the fields of marketing communication and advertising. A Visual Communication Plan is shared at the end of the paper as a hands-on approach for strategic communicators to use in planning effective communication campaigns.



## INTRODUCTION

Seventy-five percent of our daily information is received visually (Berger, 1989), making it vital for brands in the marketplace to evaluate not just what they say to consumers, but what they *show* consumers. And, in an increasingly fast-paced world, visuals have the ability to communicate information more quickly and succinctly than words alone. Advertising, as a function to influence and persuade consumers in their selection of goods, is a hub of where these visual communications are created (Bonseipe, 1965), and must leverage a strategic approach. This paper examines the role of visuals and how they can be incorporated within the discipline of strategic communication to move design from a subjective, aesthetic space to an objective, strategic space that influences outcomes. This area is called 'Visual Strategy' and concerns itself with the visual elements and principles that create the outward face of a brand at consumer touch points.

Visual Strategy is of great importance for businesses today in connecting with consumers, and to sustain consumer relationships over time. Great design is not only relevant and aesthetically pleasing, but "companies like Apple and Target have raised the bar so high in their use of design that the public is more aware than ever of what good design looks like and what design-led companies are capable of producing" (Rae, 2013, p. 32). The implication here is for brands

to use design to their competitive advantage and better understand why visuals look the way they do, what intentions are behind them, and what effects they have. Feldwick, in his article "Brand = Meaning" suggests that "perhaps companies have become frightened by the power of the visual image, the fact that they cannot ultimately define it or put it into words or control it" (Feldwick, 2014, p. 22). Though the visual image – its effects, power, and elusiveness – can be difficult to define, there are aspects that can be examined more closely so it can be used strategically. An in-depth look at semiology, visual rhetoric, and object-relations theory will articulate how brands can – and should – use visual strategy as a method of persuasion.

The crux of this argument assumes that images are not merely reflections of reality, but have embedded meaning that viewers extract and process upon looking at them (Foss, 1994). Furthermore, style plays an integral role in the use of images; for example, there cannot be one image of a sunset to represent what a sunset is, rather, there are depictions of a sunset that are differentiated through style (Scott, 1994). It is the style of one depiction of a sunset versus another that has different communicative – and persuasive – effects; thus, images must be strategically chosen in terms of the effect it will have on consumers' perception. Visuals, then, have two major implications – the first is

that images have the capability to carry information and meaning, and that the way in which those images are represented will have different persuasive effects.

This paper reviews Semiotics from Culture Studies to examine meaning associated with imagery; Visual Rhetoric from Literary Theory to examine how visual meaning has persuasive effects; and Consumer-Object Relations Theory from Consumption Studies to examine the emotional relationship between an object's meaning and an individual. All three of these theories, at their base, rely on visuals as the primary communicative tool that ultimately "deepen our understanding of how best to parse and comprehend the role of particular visual elements within the ad system" (McQuarrie and Mick, 2003, p. 192). These theories are used, then, to evaluate how visuals can be used to communicate with purpose within the framework of a strategic communications campaign.

The research question is then: How can brands use design as a strategic communication tool at consumer touch points to persuade consumers in their choice of goods?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Semiology**

Human culture is made up of signs, and we are constantly communicating with and making sense of those signs. The hallmark of semiotics is to understand

the process of signmaking and interpretation of those signs in communication (Bal and Bryson, 1991). Semiotic theory is based on two models of semiotics – that of signifier/signified and that of relation between sign and object. The founding father of semiotics, Ferdinand de Saussure, theorized that every sign is made up of sound-images (signifiers) and the concept generated by the signifiers (signifieds); the relation between the signifier and signified is based on learned convention (versus an inherent trait of the object). The second founding father of semiotics, C.S. Peirce, theorized there are three types of relations between sign and object to understand how signs communicate: the iconic, indexical, and symbolic. The iconic image is representative; the indexical sign signifies cause and effect; and symbolic meaning rests on (learned) convention (Vestergaard & Schroder, 1985); For example, an image of fire is an icon for fire, smoke is an indexical sign of fire (cause and effect), and the word “Fire” is symbolic in that the words are a learned convention that mean “Fire.” Saussure’s work is grounded upon the theory that signs are arbitrary structures dictated by culturally constructed notions (Oswald, 2012) and Peirce argued that the sign, object, and interpretant cooperate to create communication (Rochberg-Halton and McMurtrey, 1983).

Umberto Eco, a prominent semiotics scholar of the late twentieth century, combined Peirce and Saussure’s work to argue that culture and signification are

both “subject to codes that articulate the inchoate mass of phenomena we call reality into cultural categories and meanings” (Oswald, 2012, p. 11). Eco’s broader idea of semiotics presents an approach to understanding existing cultural attributes of signs and how meaning is continually created. Related to products or goods, then, semiotics theorizes that a product is able to transcend its functional purpose and be consumed in symbolic form. For example, in advertising, the art director is charged with the task of bringing a consumer product and representation of the world together so there is relevance and similarity between them; the aim is that the two elements are joined “in such a way that the viewer/reader glimpses an essential similarity between them. When this symbolic equivalence is successfully established, the viewer/reader attributes to the consumer good certain properties of the consumer good and the transfer of meaning from world to good is accomplished” (McCracken, 1986, p. 74). In this light, advertising can be thought of as a medium that is able to tap into symbolic communication and thus “mobilize people...and if properly harnessed, be used to direct behavior (Sherry, 1985, p. 455).”

In “Building Brands: Architectural Expression in the Electronic Age,” Schroder explores the iconography of classical architecture as a semantically rich symbol to communicate (for a bank brand) specific intangible values of stability, dignity and security via tangible visual architectural elements. In this view, visual

symbols are translated to specific meanings that when connected to a brand have the power to persuade. By understanding the semiological code at play, advertisers can make strategic choices about what images to use in their communication.

## **Visual rhetoric**

Visual Rhetoric is the study of how images are used to communicate with and persuade audiences. It stems from the discipline of Rhetoric, which traces its roots back to classical Greece and has primarily concerned itself with the verbal aspect of persuasive communication. The pervasiveness of imagery used in a persuasive manner, however, rose with the advent of mass commercialization in the 1950s and by the 1970s, modern rhetoricians argued for the inclusion of visuals within the traditionally verbal discipline (Scott, 1994). The work of such rhetorical theorists and scholars has resulted in a body of work to date that has solidified visual rhetoric as a pillar of visual theory today.

The underlying assumption of visual rhetoric is that images are not just representations of reality, but are information-laden symbolic forms (signs) that we cognitively process and attribute meaning to (Scott, 1994). Moreover, images have shared cultural meanings, acting analogously to the written word that can thus be used as a communication system. Foss (1994) argues that

images have an even greater capability than words to communicate, as images are able to access a wide range of human experience, and often in a quick glance. In advertising, visual rhetoric can be used to understand how images connect with audiences in a persuasive manner because the theory explicitly underscores the way visuals can act as communicative tools. There are three main approaches to understanding Visual Rhetoric in the context of advertising, which are outlined below.

The rhetorical figure is one such approach to understanding Visual Rhetoric, proposed by McQuarrie and Mick in their chapter "The Contribution of Semiotic and Rhetorical Perspectives to the Explanation of Visual Persuasion in Advertising." The authors propose the rhetorical figure is a powerful device to influence and persuade consumers in advertisements because it deviates from literal interpretation (2003); defined as an artful deviation, the rhetorical figure can best be described as a characteristic of an object that calls attention to itself because it departs from the norm. It has three properties, each with a corresponding consumer-specific persuasive tactic. The first is text marking, such as an italicized or bolded word, which signals to readers to read the word differently. This results in garnering attention, which is the first and most important aspect of advertising. The second property, incongruity, is argued by the authors to be arousing and provoke cognitive elaboration because it

requires the reader to find resolution in its meaning. The process of resolution translates to elaboration and where there is greater elaboration, there is greater cognitive participation. The third property is pleasure of the text, derived from the artful deviation. It is thought that it "pleases a reader to encounter a text that sets multiple meanings in motion" (p.198), which prompts the reader to decipher the author's intent and potentially produce a positive attitude.

McQuarrie and Mick's work on the rhetorical figure presents specific visual characteristics and how they lend themselves to different modes of processing, and thus, persuasion.

The rhetorical framework proposed by Scott (1994) is a second approach to understand persuasive techniques within advertisements. She proposes that 1) images can represent concepts, 2) the arrangement of visual elements make arguments, and 3) visual elements carry meaning in their delivery. This third point underscores the importance of style within a visual presentation. For example, a sunset does not have one depiction but multiple depictions, and depending on which depiction of a sunset, there will be different meanings. In advertising, the choice of which sunset to pick should be strategically made with an understanding of the sunset's meaning and, for example, who the ad will be targeting with this specific sunset.



The last approach to Visual Rhetoric is that of the visual metaphor, which Philips (1997) proposed as having the same impact as verbal metaphors in terms of its meaning transfer. For example, when consumers see the Snuggle bear, they think of softness. This concept is closely rooted to Semiology in that a symbol stands for a specific meaning, but in the context of visual rhetoric, the persuasive principle is in effect giving the symbol power in terms of its strategic use. Meaning, the Snuggle bear not only stands for softness, but also communicates a key brand benefit of softness.

### **Consumer-object relations theory**

Consumer-Object Relations Theory examines how objects provide value not only through function and utility, but also via meaning that prompts a cognitive and emotional response. It assumes that individuals do not purchase and consume products in a rational and logical way, but “involves a steady flow of fantasies, feelings, and fun encompassed by what we call the ‘experiential view’” (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982, p. 132). This theory regards the individual as not processing purchase decisions rationally, but rather, as a choice to make that will give pleasure or fulfill desire. Consumers are then viewing objects not only for their functional attributes, but are reacting emotionally to their meaning, which is derived from two places: the inherent communicative

power of possessions that communicate social status within a culture, and the way possessions form and reflect an individual's identity (Richins, 1994). In this view, an individual's response to an object is characterized by the object's perceived meaning to the individual.

Today's commodity culture is built upon the notion that people consume products to satisfy a specific want or desire in their personal lives, or to project a specific status: "Whether one is looking for happiness, identity, beauty, love, masculinity, youth, marital bliss or anything else, there is a commodity somewhere which guarantees to provide it" (Gabriel and Lang, 1995, p. 17). Businesses create such products, Marketing gets them into the marketplace, and advertising seeks to connect these products to the right consumer for consumption. Relating this to the visual world, we can use visuals that represent the symbolic meaning of an object to connect with consumers on an emotional level.

By appropriating specific visual attributes that are tied to an object's meaning, we can appeal to (and thus persuade) consumers in their choice of goods. Specifically, when a consumer is confronted by a choice of goods it can be assumed they "consume things that hold particular symbolic meanings...because these objects embody a system of meanings, through which we express ourselves and communicate with others" (Wattanasuwan,

2005, p. 180). For example, the thrifty consumer who prides herself on shopping off-brand (i.e. generics) will look for specific visual cues that tell her the product is off-brand, like simple fonts and generic graphics on a white background; specific visual cues thus guide her consumption choices and in return will “satisfy the freedom and fulfill the responsibility of self-definition...through the systematic appropriation of the meaningful properties of goods” (McCracken, 1986, p. 80).

In some cases, the meaning of the object or the visual can be so expressive of the meaning, it can transform the individual to no longer see the object itself, but instead their own values and beliefs (Woodward, 2011). Belk and Tumbat explore this idea in “The Cult of Macintosh” by conducting ethnographies of fiercely loyal Mac users. Their research revealed that “Mac users espouse a belief that salvation can be achieved by transcending corporate capitalism...which they pursue through their purchases of hardware, software, etc...” (p. 212). Additionally, it is the look of the logo and other collateral (posters, t-shirts, stickers) that expresses the Apple personality they embrace so fiercely – its rebellious anti-corporate spirit of “lust, knowledge, hope, and anarchy” (p. 213). The users consume the visual iconography of Apple and its associated meaning to reflect a sense of their individual and collective identity.

Products thus carry the ability to communicate cultural meaning, and the visual cues assigned to them have persuasive capabilities to guide individuals in consuming the product.

## RESEARCH COMPONENT

### **Study 1: Symbolic Communication**

Package design is a primary site where visual cues are used to quickly communicate properties and benefits of a brand to persuasive ends. For example, packaging employs visual cues like colors, fonts, images, material type and shape to communicate with consumers what kind of product it is, and what benefit it provides. The richness of certain symbols allows brands to create a “mental transfer of meaning from one cultural category, such as pleasure, to another, such as soft drinks, which forms the basis of brand identity and semiotic value of goods” (Oswald, 2012, p. 72). And it is at such sites like packaging where it is “chiefly the visual aspect...that conjoins the world to the object when meaning transfer is sought” (McCracken, 1986, p. 75).

This study aims to isolate the properties of a visual cue and the specific qualities and characteristics the sign represents. Specifically, this study looks at food packaging design and what visual signs are used to communicate specific product attributes. The hypothesis is based on how a brand “draws upon the

semiotic networks linking the brand with the consumer's world [and that] the brand will not only "make sense" but will enter consumer culture where it resonates with consumer needs and wants" (Oswald, 2012, p. 73). This study is based upon the idea that there is a shared set of cultural beliefs about what specific images symbolize or represent to most people, and that when those images are employed they quickly communicate specific benefits.

**Hypothesis:** People share a set of beliefs about what certain images represent, and those beliefs have strong communicative effects.


**Method:** An online survey was conducted over the course of five days. Snowball method was used, soliciting friends, family and colleagues through email and social media. One hundred respondents in all make up the sample size, with 72% of the respondents being female; 65% of the respondents are between the ages of 26 and 35. The survey was set up to address the use of semiology in three ways: the first was to look at ten common images in isolation to see what meanings are associated with them; the second was to look at six package designs and see what overall communication was conveyed; the third area looks at sets of package design to see which design within the set best conveys a specific attribute. It is hypothesized that there will be a common selection among respondents based on visual cues employed within the









package design because people share a set of beliefs about what certain images represent.


**Results and Discussion:** The results overall support the hypothesis – that people do share a set of beliefs about what certain images represent, and that those beliefs have strong communicative effects.

In section one, the objective was to see if an isolated image communicated a specific attribute. For each image, three choices were presented based on possible attributes to the image (for example, when respondents were shown a honey bee, the possible answers were probable choices of “pain” “honey” and “flowers”). It was important to have similarities between the choices to introduce some conflict between attributes, because if the choices were so disparate that only one answer seemed logical, it would have greatly skewed the results in favor of the hypothesis. Below are the images and possible answers for each one, with the percentage of respondents’ choice.

[Please see Appendix, “Study 1” to reference images at full size]

Image	Choice 1	Choice 2	Choice 3
	Whole Grain - 92%	America - 4%	Nature - 4%

Honey Bee 	Pain - 4%	Honey - 90%	Flowers - 6%
Teddy Bear 	Nighttime - 12%	Innocence - 40%	Softness - 48%
Farm 	Acreage - 33%	Utopia - 10%	Natural - 57%
Dove 	Freedom - 4%	Unity - 3%	Peace - 93%
Wine 	Fermentation - 9%	California - 7%	Relaxation - 84%
Beach 	Vacation - 99%	Sunburn - 0%	Swimming - 1%
Kissing 	Romance - 75%	Marriage - 0%	Youth - 25%
Grilling 	Picnics - 6%	Summertime - 91%	Dinner Parties - 3%

Earth 	Gardening - 3%	Sustainability - 89%	Recycling - 8%
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*Table 1: Attributes Communicated by Images*

From this data, it can be concluded that common images communicate specific attributes. In the case of some images like the teddy bear and farm, images have dual meanings which point to the need for images to be vetted in some sense (even a random small sample) before using on packaging or in print advertising to make certain the right image is being used to convey the desired attribute.

In section 2, six packages were shown individually to respondents. They were asked, "Overall, what is this package trying to communicate?" and were given the choices of taste, health, fun, premium, natural/organic, or "other" with the opportunity to write in their own response. They were then asked what visual characteristic of the design led them to choose the answer they did. The objective in this section was to identify what a package design holistically communicated to consumers, and then to see what visual cues best demonstrated that message. [Please see Appendix, "Study 1" to reference packaging images]












Brand	Taste	Health	Fun	Premium	Natural	Other	Visual Cue
Cheese-It Zings 	72	0	21	0	0	7	1 - Font of "Zings" 2 - Vegetable
Cheerios Dulce de Leche 	66	10	0	16	1	7	Caramels
Trix 	14	0	82	0	0	4	1 - Bright Colors 2 - Rabbit
Way Better Chips 	0	58	0	2	35	5	1 - Sweet Potato 2 - White background







Doritos Spicy Sweet Chili 	82	0	11	0	0	7	1 – Fire/Flame 2 – Bright colors
Mom's Best 	0	41	1	6	45	7	1 – Tree 2 – Mom's Best

*Table 2: Attributes Communicated through Package Design*

The results show how visual cues communicate specific attributes, and can be used to persuade consumers about the product benefits. For example, Zings is a new product by the brand Cheese-It and overwhelmingly communicated “taste” to the respondents through the strategic use of the font for Zings. Compared to the other packages, no other package was noted for its font; in the case of Zings, it can be argued that the font was the primary visual in telling respondents that the product is good tasting. This data set shows that there are multiple kinds of visual cues throughout packaging design – from the font of the brand name to the color of the background or use of a character – and should be examined for its communicative properties.

Section 3 was set up to present respondents with an in-store situation, as though they were choosing among products to purchase based on a specific attribute. They were asked, “Which of the three packages shown best communicates health?” and were shown three different brands and package designs from one category that all convey health. [Please Appendix, “Study 1” to reference full size packaging images]

Category	Brand 1	Brand 2	Brand 3	Visual Cue
Chips	Baked Lays – 14% 	Kettle Cooked Lays – 8% 	Simply Tostitos – 78% 	1 – “Simply” 2 – Muted colors 3 – Corn image
Granola	Quaker – 11% 	Qi’a – 70% 	Cascadian Farm – 19% 	1 – See through window 2 – Simplicity 3 – Listed ingredients
Yogurt	Chobani – 29% 	Fage – 26% 	Stonyfield – 45% 	1 – Simplicity 2 – Farm/Cow Image 3 – Fruit image

Fruit Snacks	Annie's - 69% 	Welch's - 21% 	Mott's - 10% 	1 - "Organic" 2 - Annie's Logo 3 - Real fruit images
Ketchup	Heinz - 15% 	Annie's - 81% 	Hunts - 4% 	1 - Annie's logo 2 - Farm/tomato image 3 - "Organic"

*Table 3: Health Attributes Communicated in Package Design*

This data set presents results about respondents' opinions and beliefs about a product and its attributes based on visual cues. From this data, it can be concluded that specific visuals influence respondents' perception of health. For example, the words "simplicity" and "organic", the use of muted earth-tone colors or a white background, or real images of ingredients visually convey the attribute of health.

**Limitations and Further Considerations:** When well-known brands are introduced to respondents, they do have persuasive effects with regard to certain attributes. In the third section of the study, Annie's organic brand – regardless of what the package may look like (like the pink and yellow candy color of their fruit snacks package) – could "say" health simply because respondents are familiar with the brand and know it is organic, thus inferring its

health credentials. It can be argued that in the ketchup category, Heinz has the healthier looking label, but between the brand of Heinz and Annie's, Annie's communicates health because of its reputation as an organic brand. One way to avoid brand bias in a similar study would be to erase or black out the brand, or use lesser-known brands.

## **Study 2: Visual Complexity and Persuasive Effects**

In creating a print advertisement, a designer will make several choices about how to construct the layout to best communicate the product's message, with imagery being one of the most important choices to make. This study is based on the theory of visual rhetoric proposed by Scott (1994), which "recasts pictures as information in symbolic form – as messages that must be processed cognitively by means of complex combinations of learned pictorial schemata that do not necessarily bear an analogy to nature" (p. 253). Scott's theory looks at how advertising uses imagery metaphorically to signal or signify an implied meaning to the product versus using imagery as a context or environment.

Using Scott's theory as a framework, advertising has a choice as to how it uses images to communicate with an audience, and this study proposes that the advertisements that use imagery most similar to how it is found in nature will be less effective than images that are treated as information-laden symbolic forms –

i.e. a visual metaphor. To illustrate this point are two dish soap ads, shown below. The Cascade ad uses visual metaphor by showing a fried egg as the plate with a delicious looking bowl of ice cream on top of it, which we know are two foods that do not belong together; further, the product shot of Cascade reinforces the idea of cleanliness and that because the foods do not belong together, the plate is not clean. The Mrs. Meyer's ad, on the other hand, shows the dish soap product large and at the forefront, and uses imagery to set the context of a kitchen environment, as that is where one would use dish soap. The visual doesn't attempt much more than that.



*Examples of high to low metaphor*

With the dish soap example in mind, this study has been set up to test the tension of visual complexity. It argues that the visual metaphor demands the consumer's attention because it is visually complex; the simpler the image, on

the other hand, ceases to capture the attention of the consumer and will therefore not be comprehended (Pieters, Wedel, Batra 2010). Meaning, would respondents have higher degrees of attention, comprehension, attitude change, intention to purchase, and overall preference when high levels of visual metaphor are used?

**Hypothesis:** Advertisements with a high degree of visual metaphor are more effective, persuasive, and better liked than ads without.

**Method:** Fifteen respondents individually filled out a four-page questionnaire in person, in either their private residence or in a quiet isolated space where they work. Respondents were a convenience sample of friends, family and colleagues of the author, 8 of which were female and 7 were male; ages ranged from 27 to 55, with the majority in the range of 30-40 years old. Respondents were given three sets of print advertisements and a corresponding worksheet to fill out, which asked them to evaluate and order the three ads (best to worst by circling the answer that best fit and crossing out the answer that least fit) within the set according to specific characteristics: attention, comprehension, attitude change, intention to purchase, and overall preference. The three ads within each set were all part of the same category (Auto, Cosmetic, Dish Soap) but the ads all had varying levels of visual metaphor. After they completed the three worksheets for each set of ads, they were asked to

pick their overall preferred ad and answer a set of questions about why they preferred the image and its persuasive effects.

**Results and Discussion:** Overall, the results of this study do not support the hypothesis; rather, the results show that consumers first consume visual messages by brand, and then by how relevant the category product or brand is to their lives.

Set one presents respondents with three sets of Auto Ads (see image below). The Audi ad on the far left was chosen as the advertisement with the highest level of visual metaphor because the visual is not only complex – showing multiple models of Audi race cars within the existing Audi model – but embeds the sports car heritage of the brand within the visual to tell a story. The BMW ad in the middle employed an average level of visual metaphor because the ad is not complex and employs aesthetic visual cues like lighting on the car to signal sleekness, and storm clouds to convey power and mystery or intrigue. The Jeep ad on the right shows the lowest level of visual metaphor and uses a traditional approach to showing cars, which is to show several models lined up next to one another. While the Jeep ad does have an environment around it using visual metaphor – the city scape in the background juxtaposed by the cavernous cave paintings to signal longevity or reliability – it is easy to miss and does not rely on the reader to interpret it in order to understand it is a Jeep ad.



The results of this set were inconsistent, and show the ways in which each ad touched on a different aspect of communication. For example, though the Audi ad was not the easiest to understand, it had high marks for grabbing attention and making respondents interested in the product; the BMW ad had low marks for nearly every category except making respondents want to purchase the product and overall preferred; while Jeep had low marks overall, was the highest rated for easiest to understand. The results for this particular set of stimulus were more inconsistent than the results of the other two sets of stimulus, which I account for brand bias. When respondents were asked to choose their overall favorite ad among the nine ads shown, over half of the ads selected were from this set of car stimulus; I hypothesize based on the write-in answers at the end of the questionnaire that brand bias played a large part with the inconsistent results shown below.

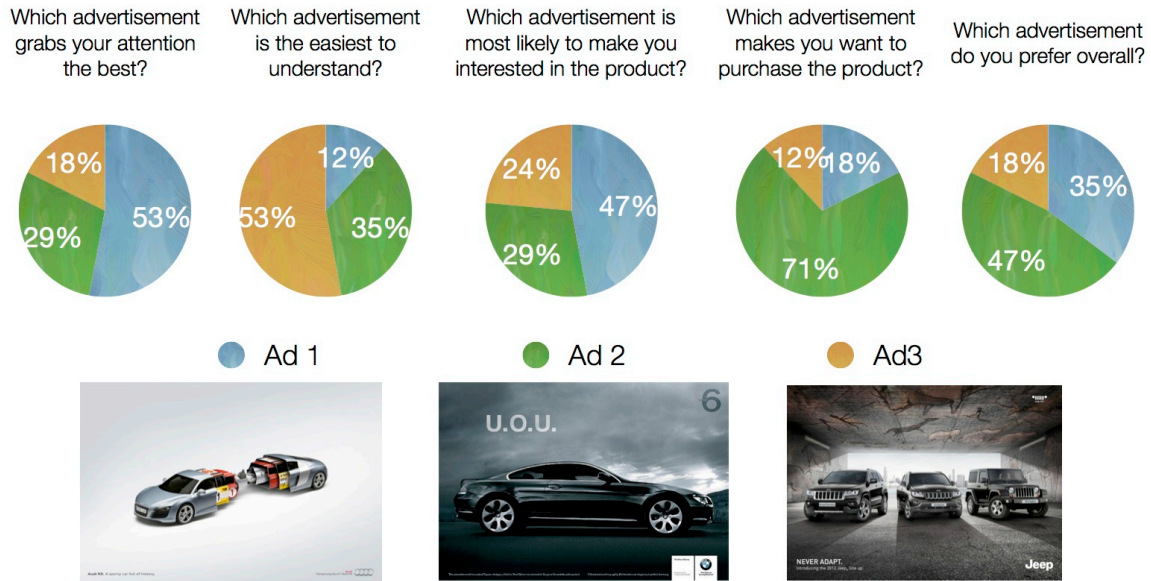


Table 4: Visual Metaphor for Auto Ads

The second set of advertisements shows well-known cosmetics brands, and the results were far more consistent across categories to support the hypothesis. In this set, the Lancome ad on the left has a moderate amount of visual metaphor, using the light and sparkly background to reinforce the product's skin luminosity benefit. The Clinique ad had the highest level of visual metaphor because its product is communicating hydration by dramatically dropping the product into a glass of water. The Maybelline ad was the most literal, showing a fashion model with edgy model-like makeup for New York's Fashion Week. Across all questions, the Clinique ad received the highest marks, supporting the hypothesis that a high level of visual metaphor is more effective, persuasive, and better liked.

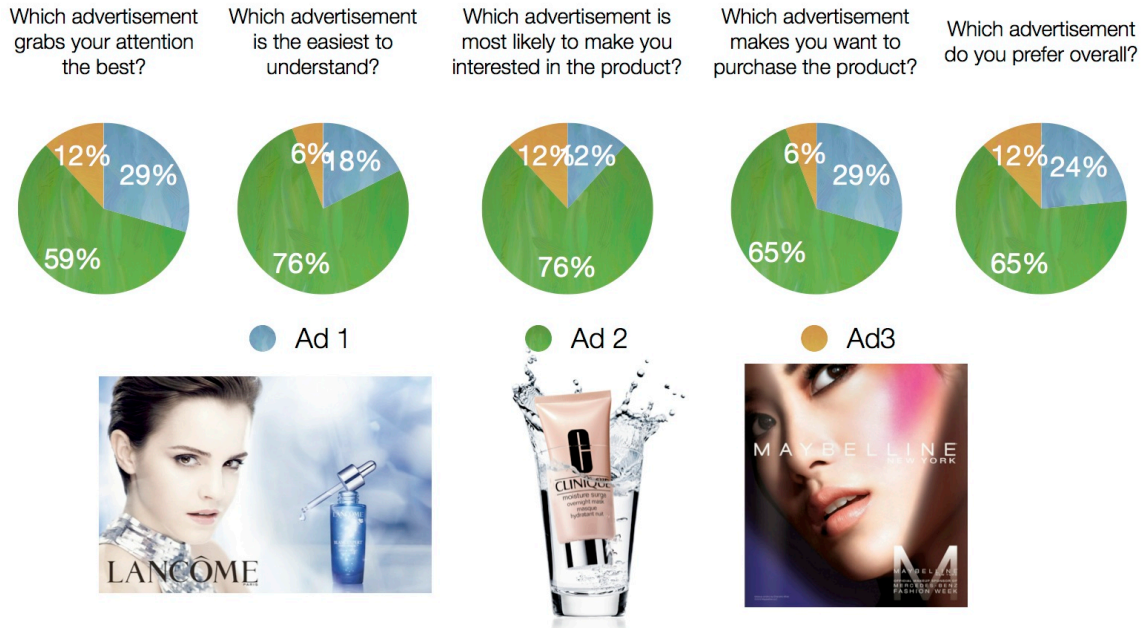


Table 5: Visual Metaphor for Cosmetic Ads

The third set of advertisements presents three well-known dish soap brands, and produced the most surprising results of the three category sets shown. The Cascade ad uses a high level of visual metaphor to communicate the story of a not-so-clean plate and that how clean your plate is will influence how your current meal tastes. Method drew a cape around its bottle to visually convey it has superpowers, employing a medium amount of visual metaphor, and Mrs. Meyer's simply shows the product within a clean kitchen environment, where one would use this product. Across all questions, Cascade received the lowest marks; for all questions except grabbing attention, Mrs. Meyer's received highest marks, which flips the hypothesis on its head. Because Mrs. Meyer's was chosen as the overall preferred ad among the nine, some additional insights

were gleaned, like how the clean kitchen operated not only as a contextual visual reference for kitchen, but as a visual metaphor for a clean and organized life. Here, the author's subjective opinion on what constitutes visual metaphor was different from respondents' definition of visual metaphor.

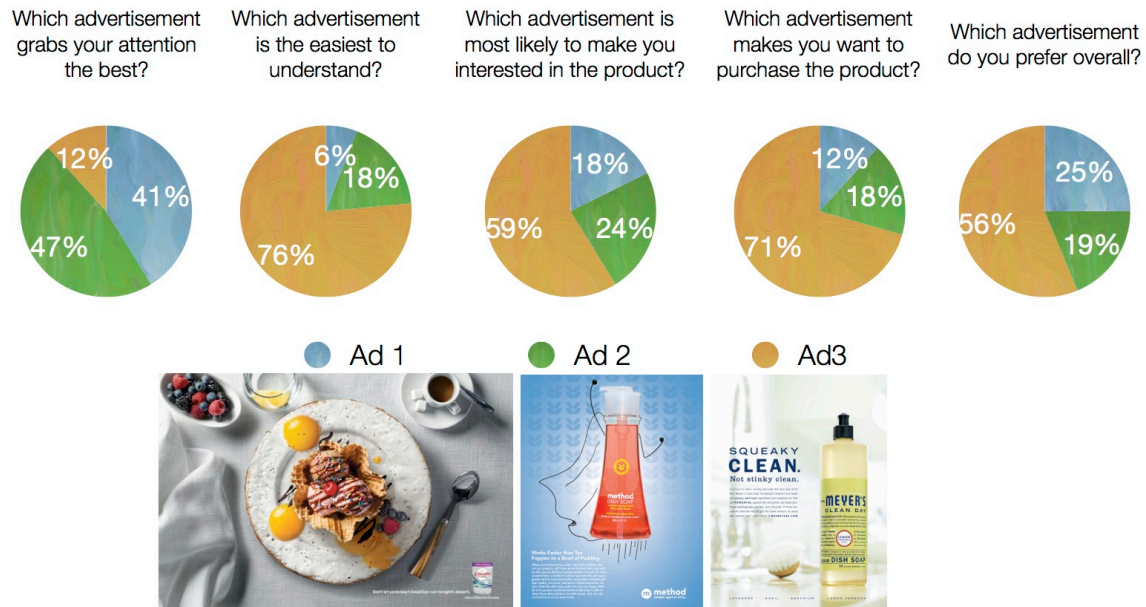


Table 6: Visual Metaphor for Dish Soap Ads

**Limitations and Further Considerations:** Brand bias was an influential factor in the results, causing respondents to be swayed by their brand preference over the visual content of the advertisement. There are two ways to revise this study to avoid respondent bias: 1) cover or remove the logos, or 2) find/create three ads of varying levels of visual metaphor, all of the same brand, and test them with the brand's intended audience.

Additionally, the definition and assigned level of visual metaphor should be rethought. As seen with the Mrs. Meyer's ad, the author's definition of visual metaphor was different from respondents, which skewed the results. One way to rethink the visual metaphor is to consider the universal visual metaphors that are circulated through our culture and test respondent response to those versus more random complex visual metaphors like the Cascade ad. Another approach to refine the definition of visual metaphor is to look to Morgan and Reichert (1999), who conducted a study that concluded concrete metaphors (versus abstract) lead to more accurate interpretation of visuals because they rely on the 5 senses (i.e. an image of a teddy bear connotes softness, which we can feel).

Lastly, the principle of least effort – that individuals are more likely to limit their use of cognitive resources – from the Heuristic Systematic Model of Information Processing (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993), should be reviewed as a counterbalance to this study, to address whether visually complex images, or visual metaphors, were unfavorable because they were not understood, or simply took too much time to decipher. Related to this last point is that of category cues and their importance within the advertising. Showing category cues – for example, category cues for dish soap could be a sink, dishwasher, water, soap, etc. – contextualizes the kind of product it is and where it is used.

Thinking back to the Cascade ad again, the category cue was focused on the eating occasion, not on the dish washing (cleaning) experience.

### **Study 3: In-depth Interviews**

In order to understand how the topic of visual communication is perceived and operates in the professional world of strategic communication campaigns, expert opinions in the fields of marketing communication and design were sought. No interviewee held the same position as another, and each presented a unique and varied view; with the variety of opinions and perspectives, the aim was to view this paper's topic with a holistic understanding of what visual communication does and can achieve. The objective was to uncover a variety of different needs visual communication currently answers – and could better answer – in order to see this paper's topic with a practical lens.

**Hypothesis:** An objective, strategic approach to the use of visuals is essential to communicate to a purpose and influence outcomes.

**Method:** Five industry experts of varying roles within agency-client projects involving visual communication were interviewed for 30-60 minutes each, individually, at their place of employment. Each interviewee had a different set of questions that were tailored to their specific role within a visual communication project (please see Appendix, Study 3 for questions), and their

responsibilities for the success of such a project. The interviewees were Kate Barton, Marketing Manager at General Mills; Cari Mosher, Brand Design Manager at General Mills; Sharon Gorney, Vice President of Brand Strategy at Ultra Creative; Kyle Jensen, Vice President of Design at Ultra Creative; and Steve Wehrenberg, Teaching Professor and Program Director of the M.A. in Strategic Communications.

**Results and Discussion:** The hypothesis was supported overall, with a very specific focus on the role of the consumer for both the creation and evaluation of design. The interviews uncovered four main ways in which to keep the consumer close to the evaluation of design: 1) holistic design response, 2) contextual appropriateness, 3) emotional response, and 4) consumer testing.

Holistic design response is, essentially, the two-second test: Does the visual clearly communicate the key message in two seconds? Kate Barton, Marketing Manager at General Mills, commented "Marketers want to communicate everything, but what matters is the message you give to consumers to get them to engage in the big picture." She used the example of the YouTube parody video (via 2006) of how Microsoft would design an Apple iPod package to illustrate the necessity of parity when talking to a consumer, so they engage with and understand the message. Sharon Gorney, Vice President of Brand Strategy at Ultra Creative reinforced this position in commenting that

those on the creating side spend far more time thinking about what the visual means than the consumer ever would, and to keep the consumer perspective at the forefront when evaluating design.

Contextual appropriateness was also frequently discussed for understanding how design can be used to strategically persuade consumers. In order for the visual to impact the target audience, it has to be understood in the context that the consumer will see it; the visual then, depending on where it's seen, will change for each respective context (i.e. a bus stop, in a magazine, or on the television screen). Kyle Jensen, Vice President of Design at Ultra Creative, cited the context in which the consumer views the message as one of three essential pieces of information needed before design can be started (the other two are who the target is, and how far he can take the design) for the reasons stated previously, but also to create distinction among the other communications in that context. He pointed to the influence of Apple's brand design strategy across all touch points in how it succinctly communicates the key message in a visual way that drives differentiation among the rest of the visual messages around it. In other words, a visual carries the responsibility of not only connecting with the consumer in a relevant way, but to connect with them where and when they view it.



The third area was not top of mind for all of the interviewees, but once articulated, connected smaller comments made throughout the interviews on how to tie together branding, consumer, and visuals. Steve Wehrenberg, Director of the M.A. Strategic Communications program highlighted the importance of the visceral, emotional response. It steps beyond communicating a clear message and reaching the consumer at the right place and moment to visually connect with the consumer and say more than words could. This is where visual communication has the most power to move and persuade consumers and reinforces the importance of the three theories reviewed for this paper. Cari Mosher, Brand Design Manager at General Mills, offers the approach of 'How & Why' when explaining the visceral nature of design to take the subjectivity out of design decisions: "Use design expertise to explain how and why design works, and then make an argument for how one design works better than the others." Adding on the consumer lens of the holistic design response and teasing up creative in the context the consumer will see it gives the creative a more definitive strategic perspective.

This brings us to the fourth area of consideration for considering how to influence outcomes using visual communication: consumer testing. While not all interviewees agreed on the details of how consumer testing should be done and results used, its importance in the process of design evaluation cannot be

ignored because it is the intersection of testing a design with the potential consumer. When done right, consumer testing can be useful; asking consumers well-crafted questions related to the business objectives can lead to helpful insights about design. On the other hand, poorly done consumer testing can lead to erroneous results that sway decision makers in the wrong direction. Cari Mosher, Brand Design Manager at General Mills, argued the case for consumer testing in high-risk design changes versus low risk design changes, which can rely more on intuition. However, she insisted upon establishing metrics with a clear objective in mind, knowing that what you put into it is what you'll get out of it. Additionally, respondent responses must be reviewed with perspective. Sharon Gorney commented that respondents can't always articulate why they like or dislike a design, so the questions asked and the weight given to those responses must be carefully chosen. And last, consider who is doing the talking – is it actually your target consumer? What is their compensation for participation in the test? What were the criteria for their selection in the test? While consumer testing may seem like the way to “prove” whether a design “works”, the variables can be costly and undermine the expertise of marketers and designers.

Ultimately, the interviews in sum confirmed the important and persuasive effects visuals have in communicating a strategy to consumers, but also lay bare

the difficulty in articulating the “correctness” of one visual over another. The best approach, as gathered throughout these conversations, is to keep the consumer the focal point of the creation and evaluation of design, and give the design the responsibility of explaining itself with a consumer lens to remove the subjectivity. Consumer testing can be used, but only carefully and cautiously.

**Limitations and Future Considerations:** Each interviewee does not represent the views of all others who hold similar positions, which makes the results of this study unique and impossible to replicate. However, conducting the same interview questions for each position but with a different person in that role would help broaden the insights and test patterns or themes of topical concerns for each position. For example, interviewing ten designers would likely hold similar views on the topics pertaining to this paper and reveal patterns of beliefs, though their opinions and experience would likely vary enough to provide new insights.

## CONCLUSION

The pervasiveness of imagery in our culture is not simply an aesthetic decoration or mirror reflection of the world we live in, but a way in which we communicate messages and signify meaning with purpose. It is this purposeful use of visuals in advertising which “aims to get across a variety of cultural

meanings that lie beneath the surface and that are difficult to put into words.”

(Malmelin and Oy, 2010, p. 135). Thus, the use of visuals must be viewed as compelling and persuasive arguments that should be embedded within strategic communication campaigns; this paper makes the case that visuals are a crucial component of how that campaign message is reinforced with consumers.

Visuals are not only loaded with meaning, as semiology shows us, but have persuasive effects when used with purpose, as visual rhetoric exemplifies. Semiotics gives brands and advertisers a new lens with which to see images, in that images’ meanings are not only consumed but also have associated attributes – particularly when linked to consumer goods. In harnessing semiotics, brands can begin to see how images create meaning for their brands and products that transcend functional attributes. Study 1 shows that images not only have the capability to carry information or meaning, but that images have shared meanings among respondents that brands can use to their advantage, particularly when needing to quickly communicate benefits, like on packaging.

With regard to visual rhetoric, Scott’s argument for the strategic choice of style presents an important approach to consider when creating advertisements. In choosing specific images to represent a concept, advertising must make a strategic choice as to the style that will utilize its associative effects effectively and take into consideration how consumers will interpret its meaning. Despite its

limitations, Study 2 shows that the style of a message's visual portrayal will have an effect on the persuasiveness of the ad. For example, the Mrs. Meyer's ad was preferred over the Cascade ad because of the stylistic choices it made; the ad signified a clean kitchen, whereas the Cascade ad portrayed the mess and disgust of an unclean plate.

Furthermore, consumer-object relations theory shows us that consumers view objects not only for their functional attributes, but react emotionally to their meaning. Using the Mrs. Meyer's ad as an example, the style of the photograph represented a clean kitchen, which held specific meaning to respondents, like a cleaner or more organized life. Because of this, visuals have the power to persuade consumers in their choice of goods or brands, and the importance of weighing such a strategic choice cannot be overstated. The in-depth interviews confirmed the necessity of this connection – between brand and consumer – so the consumer lives at the heart of the strategy and decisions are made around how they view, interpret, and respond to brand messages.

The literature reviewed and studies conducted for this paper support the argument that visuals have communicative effects, and that when used strategically, can have persuasive effects. It is through Visual Strategy that one can understand how "Visuals help render a large amount of detail into practical frameworks that are relevant and appropriate to people's understanding of the

everyday world... [how] they legitimize (and thus facilitate) the grounds upon which some interpretations can be favored and others impeded” (Rodriguez and Dimitrova, 2011, p. 51).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

For further consideration is the exploration of visual literacy – to be able to read, analyze, and evoke meaning from visual text through the means of visual grammar (typefaces, color, page structure, photographs, illustrations, graphs and charts). A more tactical discussion of visual presentation through examination of perspective (high, low), range (close to far), and rendering (illustration versus photograph) would connect the work of this paper to the more specific graphic elements used in creating visual strategy, to better understand the work of designers and the choices they make.

Additionally, a closer examination of rhetorical literacy and whether those who are being targeted have the “ability to critically assess the kind of tones and visual expressions that are used to address [them]...[and how] Rhetorical concepts of communications are grounded in the fact that different approaches are required in addressing different kinds of communications recipients” (Malmelin and Oy, 2010, p. 136). This area would give better insight as to how to assess a target’s capability to receive and understand brand messages, and

thus allow brands to craft messages based not only on their demographic or psychographic, but of their visual literateness.

To conclude this paper, a Visual Communication Plan has been proposed as way to bring together the principles and framing tools of Strategic Communication and the implication for visual imagery.

## VISUAL COMMUNICATION PLAN

Using the theories reviewed in this paper, primary research results, and the critical insight of executive interviews, a Visual Communication Plan is proposed. The intention is to offer a framework using the tools learned through the M.A. Strategic Communication program and find the intersecting points that drive visual decisions. The objective is to help provide critical insight into a brand's communication campaign with a design-driven point of view that represents the needs of both designers and businesses in developing creative.

The amount of information provided at a project's kick off varies from one brand to another, which makes the identification of a starting point for this framework difficult to create, but the essential information that must be provided or discovered before design work includes:

## COMMUNICATIONS BRIEF

**Desired Response:** What are we asking them to do? Switch brands? Try a new product? Come back to the brand? Reinforce loyalty? Increase rate of use? Take a single action?

**Driver:** Are we driving awareness, engagement, knowledge, education, affinity, action?



Figure 7: Communications Brief

While there are many more factors that could be included in the above figure, it is necessary to make choices about how much information is taken from the business brief (the kick off document provided by the brand to the agency) to put into the communications brief that designers will use to create visual strategy:

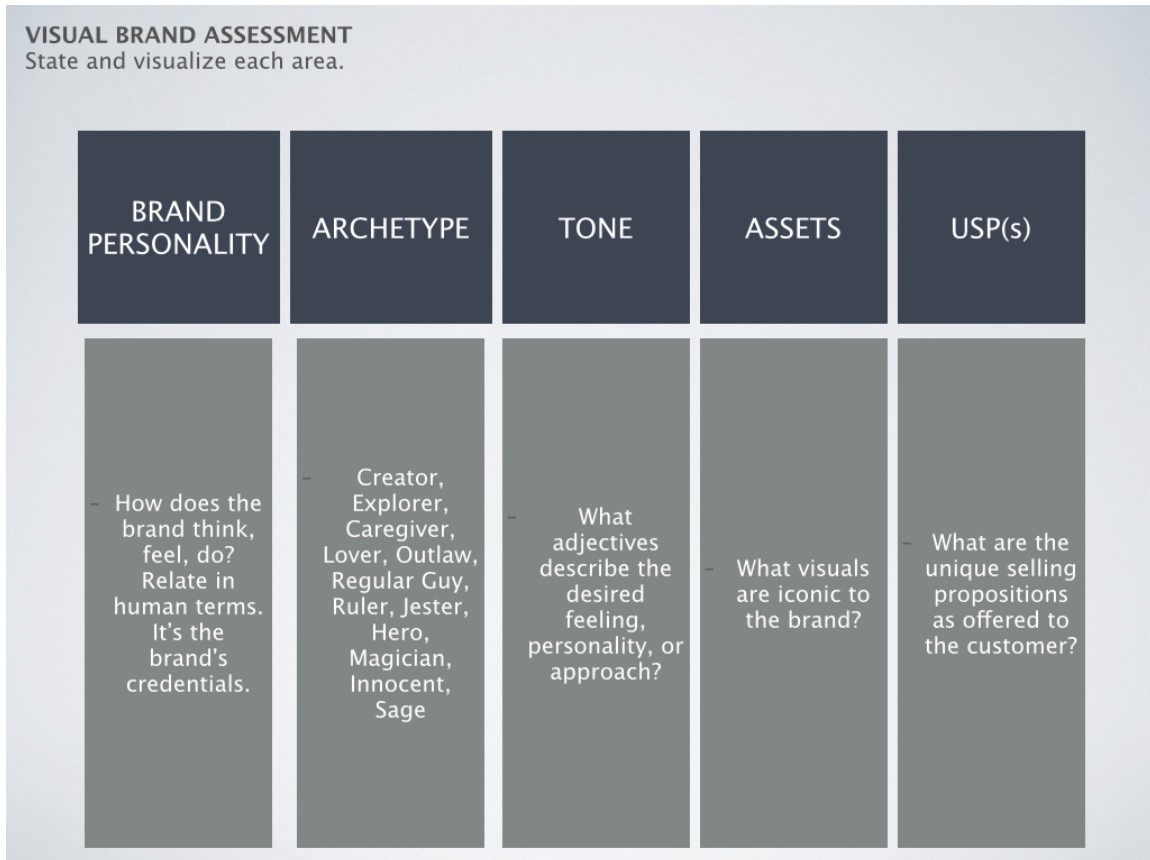
“Strategic challenges tend to be fuzzy, multidimensional, and often wide in scope. Designers are not taught how to define opportunities in ways that are credible in a business context. Framing essentially consists of



distilling a complex set of issues down to a few critical variables. These are then used to frame problem definitions, hypotheses and points of view...that help designers focus on the ultimate objectives – by developing clear decision-making principles and tools” (McCullagh, 2013, p. 34).

Oftentimes, a business brief can be lengthy, and while 8-page project briefs help Account Managers wrap their heads around the assignment at hand, a shorter, more focused communications brief is needed for designers.

It works to the advantage of the account managers and strategists to recognize that designers are busy and their task is to take business problems and create visual solutions. Part of creating a focused visual communications plan for designers is to present background information about the brand in a clear and easily digestible way. The account manager and strategist should work together to fill out this information:



*Figure 8: Visual Brand Assessment*

While SWOT analysis, heritage stories, corporate culture and brand reputation reports may all be interesting to a designer, the brand needs to be summarized with the most important factors that will influence visual design: personality, archetype, tone, assets, and unique selling proposition(s) (USP). Articulating these five areas – and where possible, visually showing them – will help designers understand the main components of a brand as the consumer would, which preserves brand continuity and maintains clear brand communication.

Last is the visual communications framework, which is used to synthesize the consumer-facing message argument with direct ties to visuals. The intention behind this figure is to capture the most relevant communication of the campaign and link visuals to each area, so visuals are grounded in strategy:

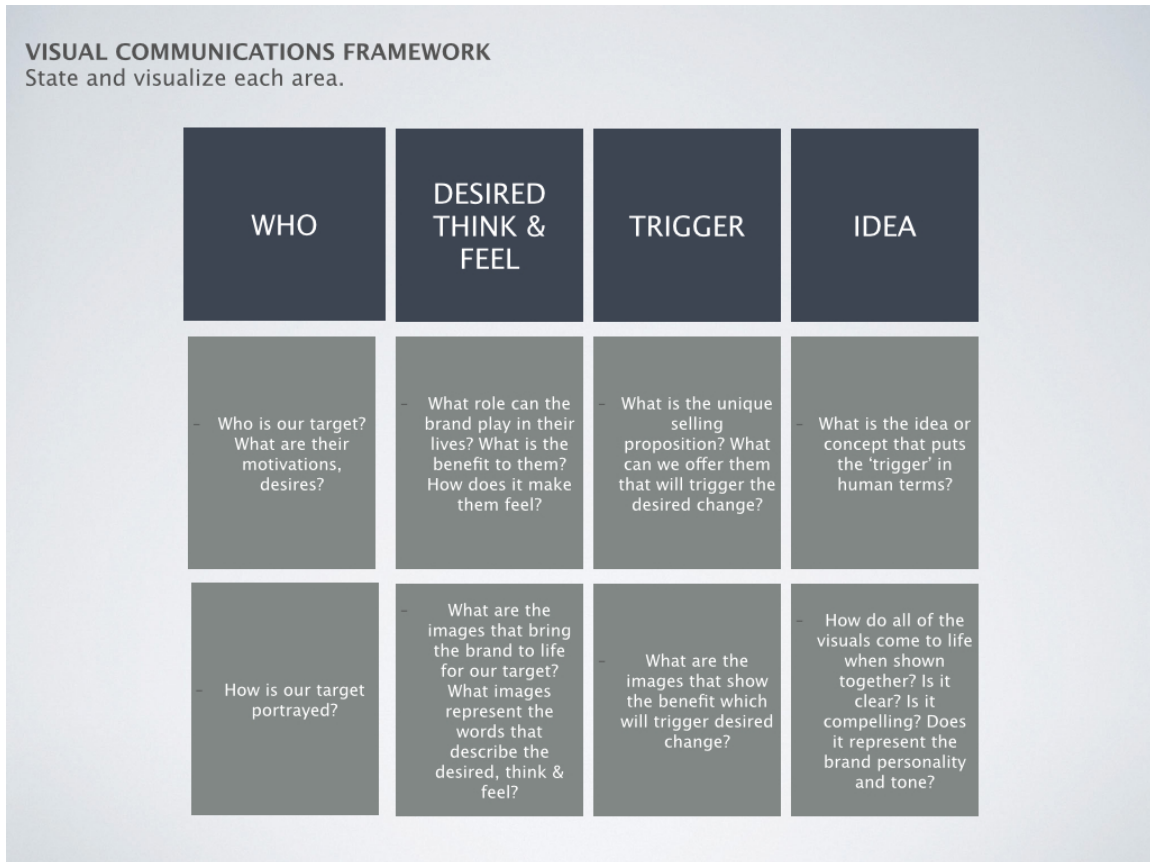


Figure 9: Visual Communications Framework

This figure would be co-created between strategist and designer to articulate the assignment, as “Some of the most valuable work designers can perform lies in the interpretation of a company’s brand elements and how customers connect

with them” (Rae, 2013, p. 34). This framework also sets up a clear and agreed-upon evaluation tool when reviewing designs, so they are evaluated internally with strategic measures and not on subjective terms.

This framework would also be used to describe the visual strategy to the brand when presenting creative work. While the brand handed off a business brief at the beginning of the project, they expect to be given a design-centric perspective that explains how it fulfills their business strategy: “To persuade [businesses], messages should be honed to be clear, concise, and cogent. Make them appeal to the head through sound rationale, and to the heart through well-chosen examples, metaphors, and stories” (McCullagh, 2013, p. 34). This framework is one step towards providing a common-sense approach to explaining visual decisions.

Ultimately, this framework ties together business objectives, strategic communication principles, and design perspectives in order to communicate to a purpose. With this framework, communication campaigns are grounded in a common language among clients, strategists and designers to effectively and deliberately make decisions as to what work is created and chosen to persuade consumers in their choice of goods and influence outcomes.

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## APPENDIX



## STUDY 1: SYMBOLIC COMMUNICATION

### *RESULTS*

## Section 1

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

What is your age?

- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 26-35
- ☐ 36-45
- ☐ 46-55
- ☐ 56+

## Section 2: Image Association

What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.



- ☐ Whole Grain
- ☐ America
- ☐ Nature

What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.



- ☐ Pain
- ☐ Honey
- ☐ Flowers

What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.



- ☐ Nighttime
- ☐ Innocence
- ☐ Softness

What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.



- ☐ Acreage
- ☐ Utopia
- ☐ Natural

What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.



- ☐ Freedom
- ☐ Unity
- ☐ Peace

What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.



- ☐ Fermentation
- ☐ California
- ☐ Relaxation



What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.



- ☐ Vacation
- ☐ Sunburn
- ☐ Swimming

What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.



- ☐ Romance
- ☐ Marriage
- ☐ Youth

What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.



- ☐ Picnics
- ☐ Summertime
- ☐ Dinner Parties

What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.



- ☐ Gardening
- ☐ Sustainability
- ☐ Recycling

### **Section 3: Packaging Assessment**

Overall, what is this package trying to communicate? Please choose one answer.



- ☐ Taste
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Fun
- ☐ Premium
- ☐ Natural/Organic
- ☐ Other (Please write in answer below)

What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

Overall, what is this package trying to communicate? Please choose one answer.



- ☐ Taste
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Fun
- ☐ Premium
- ☐ Natural/Organic
- ☐ Other (Please write in answer below)

What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

Overall, what is this package trying to communicate? Please choose one answer.



- ☐ Taste
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Fun
- ☐ Premium
- ☐ Natural/Organic
- ☐ Other (Please write in answer below)

What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

Overall, what is this package trying to communicate? Please choose one answer.



- ☐ Taste
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Fun
- ☐ Premium
- ☐ Natural/Organic
- ☐ Other (Please write in answer below)

What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?





Overall, what is this package trying to communicate? Please choose one answer.



- ☐ Taste
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Fun
- ☐ Premium
- ☐ Natural/Organic
- ☐ Other (Please write in answer below)

What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging

material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

Overall, what is this package trying to communicate? Please choose one answer.



- ☐ Taste
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Fun
- ☐ Premium
- ☐ Natural/Organic
- ☐ Other (Please write in answer below)

What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

## Section 4 (Final Section): Packaging Categories

Which of the three packages shown best communicates health?



1



2



3

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging

material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

Which of the three packages shown best communicates health?



1



2



3

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

Which of the three packages shown best communicates health?



1



2



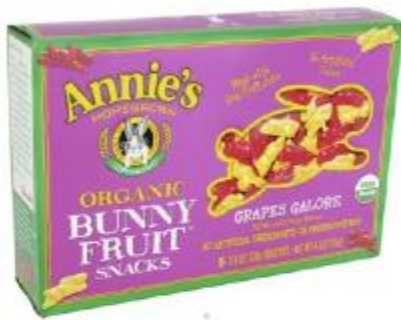
3

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your

answer above?

Which of the three packages shown best communicates health?



1



2



3

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?



Which of the three packages shown best communicates health?



1



2



3

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!**

Survey Powered By **Qualtrics**

# My Report

Last Modified: 04/18/2014

## 1. What is your gender?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Male	<div></div>	28	28%
2	Female	<div></div>	72	72%
	Total		100	


Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.72
Variance	0.20
Standard Deviation	0.45
Total Responses	100

2. What is your age?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	18-25	<div></div>	2	2%
2	26-35	<div></div>	65	65%
3	36-45	<div></div>	17	17%
4	46-55	<div></div>	11	11%
5	56+	<div></div>	5	5%
	Total		100	




Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.52
Variance	0.82
Standard Deviation	0.90
Total Responses	100

3. What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Whole Grain		92	92%
2	America		4	4%
3	Nature		4	4%
	Total		100	




Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	1.12
Variance	0.19
Standard Deviation	0.43
Total Responses	100

4. What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Pain		4	4%
2	Honey		90	90%
3	Flowers		6	6%
	Total		100	




Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	2.02
Variance	0.10
Standard Deviation	0.32
Total Responses	100

5. What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Nighttime		12	12%
2	Innocence		40	40%
3	Softness		48	48%
	Total		100	

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	2.36
Variance	0.48
Standard Deviation	0.69
Total Responses	100

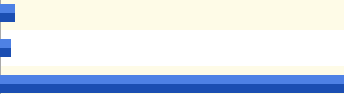
6. What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Acreage		33	33%
2	Utopia		10	10%
3	Natural		57	57%
	Total		100	

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	2.24
Variance	0.85
Standard Deviation	0.92
Total Responses	100



7. What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Freedom		4	4%
2	Unity		3	3%
3	Peace		93	93%
	Total		100	


Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	2.89
Variance	0.18
Standard Deviation	0.42
Total Responses	100

8. What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Fermentation	<div></div>	9	9%
2	California	<div></div>	7	7%
3	Relaxation	<div></div>	84	84%
	Total		100	

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	2.75
Variance	0.37
Standard Deviation	0.61
Total Responses	100

9. What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Vacation		99	99%
2	Sunburn		0	0%
3	Swimming		1	1%
	Total		100	




Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	1.02
Variance	0.04
Standard Deviation	0.20
Total Responses	100

10. What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Romance	<div></div>	75	75%
2	Marriage	<div></div>	0	0%
3	Youth	<div></div>	25	25%
	Total		100	




Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	1.50
Variance	0.76
Standard Deviation	0.87
Total Responses	100

11. What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Picnics		6	6%
2	Summertime		91	91%
3	Dinner Parties		3	3%
	Total		100	

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	1.97
Variance	0.09
Standard Deviation	0.30
Total Responses	100

12. What do you think this image symbolizes or represents to most people?  
There is no correct answer.

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Gardening		3	3%
2	Sustainability		89	89%
3	Recycling		8	8%
	Total		100	

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	2.05
Variance	0.11
Standard Deviation	0.33
Total Responses	100

13. Overall, what is this package trying to communicate? Please choose one answer.

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Taste	<div></div>	72	72%
2	Health	<div></div>	0	0%
3	Fun	<div></div>	21	21%
4	Premium	<div></div>	0	0%
5	Natural/Organic	<div></div>	0	0%
6	Other (Please write in answer below)	<div></div>	7	7%
	Total		100	

Other (Please write in answer below)
New
Flavor/variety/new profile
New Product
packaging
no consistent theme
the cheese pepper and tomatoe
spicy

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	6
Mean	1.77
Variance	2.02
Standard Deviation	1.42
Total Responses	100

14. What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

Text Response
vegetables
Background
the name (two z's) plus the font and hot peppers suggests excitement.
The word "zingz"
visuals of the peppers, and the name zingz implies spicyness
Image
Text and graphics are about flavor
Font and wordig
The word Zings and pictures of food below
Font and font size for "Zingz" which I immediately associate with a "zingy" flavor
Pepper,tomato,queso,cheese,font
The crackers.
the word "Zingz" sounds like "taste," along with the cracked cracker
name, swirls on the box, font, brighter colors
The word Zingz and the picture of the peppers.
images, flavor
font
Font, flavor indicators
thr vibrant colors, the "z"s and the peppers
color, food imagery
The name of the product
Font/graphics of the word zingz
Big zing word
name of product and font of "zingz"
the cheese and pepper
Font on the "ZingZ" type.
"Zing" and the picture of the pepper
Label, image, name relating to non-standard product
Font of zingz with fiery details make me think it tastes hot
large pictures of the flavoring (cheese and peppers) and "Zingz", which represents a 'zingy' flavor
Font of "Zings" and graphic of cheese & peppers
Colors and words, name of product
The picture of ingredients highlights that it isn't just a "regular" flavor.
Zingz (name)
Color
The picture of the peppers resting against the cheese
Zingz
The colors, the pictures of food, the name queso fundido, the font
Font
Image
Image
The word zingz, coupled with the pepper image
Masthead
font
The font is trying to be funky/fun - Taste would have been my second choice since I see ingredients in the bottom left corner. Nothing on the package screams health or natural.
The picture of the peppers & cheese, the font used for the word zings"
Font
photos of cheese and peppers
Bright colors, busy patterns, funky font
The closeup of the cracker, cheese and peppers, and the flavor in green box





15. Overall, what is this package trying to communicate? Please choose one answer.

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Taste	<div></div>	66	66%
2	Health	<div></div>	10	10%
3	Fun	<div></div>	0	0%
4	Premium	<div></div>	16	16%
5	Natural/Organic	<div></div>	1	1%
6	Other (Please write in answer below)	<div></div>	7	7%
	Total		100	

Other (Please write in answer below)
Sweet
Name recognition
dessert
breakfast can be a little bit like dessert
Greed, trying to get kids to eat more sugar
decadance
sweet

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	6
Mean	1.97
Variance	2.53
Standard Deviation	1.59
Total Responses	100

16. What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

Text Response
caramels
Colors
it's all about caramel, which suggests sweetness/taste over any other quality
Dulce de leche and the picture of a caramel
the caramel swirl under the name brand
Font
Carmel
Colors, text
The way the product is displayed and associated caramel depictions
Image of Carmel
Caramel
Everyone knows Cheerios logo, so the box change screams new flavor.
The caramel swirl, along with the font for Dulce de Leche... all feel like "sweet"
blue color with the check, whole grain, the quantified health stats on the front top left
picture of the caramels
colors, image
The caramel ribbon and cube of caramel
Big product, color cues
earthy tones and fresh milk
the font used for the flavor, the caramal swirl image
The name and font of the product
Background, for example the caramel swirl
Giant Cheerios in spoon
image of caramels
the brand name.
The caramels image.
Font
Color
Caramel swirl across the box makes me think sweet
the color brown, the look of 'multigrain', i.e. multicolored cheerios. dulce de leche is the deception.
Font of "Dulce de Leche"
Picture
The picture of ingredients highlights that it isn't just a "regular" flavor.
Again, name (dulce de leche)
Images
The caramel candy
Dulce De Leche
The colors, the pictures of food, the graphic swoosh, the name dulce de leche, the font
Wording. Whole grain
Font
Image
Font of 'dulce de leche'
Caramel swirl
caramels
The colors and style are trying to be classier than the normal cheerios packaging. Taste would have been my second choice because of the large shot of the actual cereal.
Image, font
Font
swirl of caramel, colors of the package
Big spoon shot, ingredient propping, caramel swirl background
closeup of image, font of the "Dulce de Leche" and overall colors of the package.

packaging
Image
picture of caramels
Caramel and wave of caramel
I've already seen about 25 different varieties of Cheerios
Dulce de leche...it's a flavor.
images of carmel squares, splash of milk
Dulce de Leche in a different font; images of caramel
Flavor Cue
color scheme
spoon full of cheerios and milk and carmel image
font and photo of caramels
color and image of caramel
flavor name and image of caramels
background image, colors
large image of cheerios and caramels
The script font along with the traditional font for Cheerios and no gimmicks seem to be targeting an traditional audience.
color and font
Image of caramel swirl underneath cereal pieces
flavor title
Emphasis on Carmel, doesn't seem healthy
the cursive font and wavy background suggest indulgence and luxury
Caramel pieces
CARAMEL
again, adding the caramel, along with the sub-title to the familiar indicates taste tweak.
The name and color flow.
font and illustration
whenever I see anything by Cheerios I think of healthy heart
The caramels and the caramel colored ribbon
All of the key elements of the package tie back to the product itself.
active scoop of cereal on spoon, font of "dulce of leche" and what that phrase means
background
image of caramel
Font of dulce de leche
Image and background.
font, image of caramel swirl
the wording and it being new
caramel swirl
"dulce de leche" text & images
Color, images of candy
caramel color and caramels on package
The favor name & picture of Carmel w/explanation
Image
picture of caramel
Dulce de leche is a "foreign" (read premium) flavor.
Cursive font
Caramel
non-english word and font - but mostly the neutral colors of brown and white
Colors. Caramel swirl.
caramel "wave"

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	100

17. Overall, what is this package trying to communicate? Please choose one answer.

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Taste	<div></div>	14	14%
2	Health	<div></div>	0	0%
3	Fun	<div></div>	82	82%
4	Premium	<div></div>	0	0%
5	Natural/Organic	<div></div>	0	0%
6	Other (Please write in answer below)	<div></div>	4	4%
	Total		100	

Other (Please write in answer below)
psychosis?
children
New swirls
Taste/Fun

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	6
Mean	2.84
Variance	0.90
Standard Deviation	0.95
Total Responses	100

18. What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

Text Response
rabbit
Bunny face
what is with that rabbit's face?
fruitalicious
bright colors, facial expression on the trix bunny
Colors
Fruitilicious
Color
The rabbitt
Colors
Bright colors
Fruity colors.
the ravenous look on the bunny's face
colors, character, font style
The rabbbit looks super excited to eat the ceral making breakfast and therefore mornings fun.
colors, "new"
font, multicolored cereal
Character, colors
colors and and that silly rabbit
multicolored font, cartoon spokesman
The colors and images on the product
The bunny graphic
Rabbit and colors
colors
the rabbit and the colors.
The colors in the word "fruitalicious."
Colors
Colors, image
Excited fonts and mascot
colors, cartoons, the way the worlds are written with big fonts, lots of contrasting colors for kids = fun
Bright colors and cartoon rabbit
Name and images
The fun colors and the bunny.
Image geared toward kids
Font
The color combinations - very bright
Color
The colors, the expression, the font, the name, the wackiness
Bright colors
Character
Image
Font of trix and color of letters of trix and fruitalicious
The burst
colors, image
The colorful box tells me the product will be very fruity. Second choice would be fun, because of the happy rabbit!
Bright colors, text balloon, cartoon
Picture
silly picture of the rabbit, color of package, color and font of the lettering
Very excited rabbit going after spoon, bright colors
the images are "cartoon-ey" with many colors. the Trix Rabbit looks happy and excited about the cereal. The swirls in the cereal represent fun, rather than a specific flavor

colors
Image
cartoon, fonts, colors
Rabbit
The cartoon character is intended to pique a kid's interest
Swirls
colors and cartoon character
Rabbit is looking at what's new with the cereal, has a smile on his face.
Cartoon Rabbit
typeface and colors
Bold colors and character
colors and character
trix bunny and colors = fun
flavor description (made up word) and swirls of color on product as well as product intended for kids
rabbit, swirls
rainbow of colors, font used, trix bunny's facial expression
Cartoon characters, bright colors, funky fonts all fit the children-target stereotype.
color, visual, font
word bubble product descriptor is enclosed in
Fruitalicious and colorful balls
Excitment of the rabbit, party fun colorful text "Fruitalicious"
the range of colors, eager pose of the rabbit
Rabbit is rabid
FRUITALICIOUS, DESIRE OF RABBIT
The colors and rabbit make this more about fun than taste, as Trix isn't widely known for one distinct taste.
Because Trix is always fun.
color and illustration
the colors
Color, character and font
The Fun Elements (Rabbit, Logo, Colors) and the Taste (Spoon, "Fruitalicious" kicker) are of equal weight, competing for attention.
bunny diving into spoonful of colorful trix
image of rabbit
colors, cartoon rabbit
Bright colors
Colors and image.
font, multicolored, excited rabbit image
pictures
colors, cartoon
colors, font, images
Bright colors, animated character
bright colors, bunny, font
The rainbow colors, the font of & name "swirls", the rabbit trying to grab it
Image
cartoon rabbit with look of excitement on his face
Mascot size
Cereal color
Super happy bunny
bright colors and the cartoon reach to the cereal
Fun expressive rabbit
Rabbit

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	100

19. Overall, what is this package trying to communicate? Please choose one answer.

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Taste		0	0%
2	Health	<div></div>	58	58%
3	Fun		0	0%
4	Premium	<div></div>	2	2%
5	Natural/Organic	<div></div>	35	35%
6	Other (Please write in answer below)	<div></div>	5	5%
	Total		100	

Other (Please write in answer below)
"Clean" eating - simple foods
both health and natural (not organic)
Inge
mixed message
health and natural/organic

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	6
Mean	3.29
Variance	2.39
Standard Deviation	1.55
Total Responses	100



20. What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

Text Response
vegetable
Simply used in title
the name in conjunction with the whole food (whole potato) suggests it's designed for health
Picture of a natural product; "way better"; "simply"
natural sweet potatoes pictured
Image
Simply
Text
It's plain and simple
colors, simplicity and image of sweet potato
Potato , words
Bland colors, whole potatoes.
the image of the real sweet potato
colors and general design - lots of premium cues, from handwritten font to sophisticated and minimal design
the words "way better" and the picture of the inside of the sweet potatoe
images
yam on bag, slices shown
Spare design, white
"sprouted" on label. actual product on bag
use of the word "simple," no busy color schemes or backgrounds
The name and pictures of the product
Name "way better" and use of the word "simply"
Sweet potato
name
the font and the brand and the image of the potato
The image of the sweet potato.
"Simply" and the focus on the sweet potato
Logo, name, and overall presentation
Photo of real food
"way better", with pictures of the "wholesome" ingredients and labels that claim the naturalness of the product
Graphic of sweet potato and simplicity of background
Brand and name
The brand "simply sprouted" sounds natural. NO GMO means more natural. A potato chip out of sweet potatoes would be a healthier option,
"Simply" caught me a few times
Color. Images
The word "simple", the picture of the sweet potato
Organic
The clean layout, graphics, fonts and colors, the realistic pictures, the images of veggies, the words/verbiage
Image
Ingredient awareness
Words
The image of the sweet potatoes
The white background and veggie imagery
name, photo
It's trying very hard to lool natural and healthy - nothing on the package tells me that this will taste good - I have a feeling it tastes like dirt.
Image, packaging material
Words
picture of sweet potatoes, plain bag
Clean background , natural food shot, hand written font
Product name, the call out of "Simply" at the bottom with the flavor of chip; the white background and closeup of a sweet potato, rather of the actual prodcut image

name of product
Font images
picture of actual vegetable, the words "way better," clean white background
Sweet potatoes
Sweet potatoes and tortilla chips don't go together well. It is a cultural clash that doesn't work.
"Way better"
earthy colors and image whole sweet potato
Way Better Snacks, white background for me indicates healthy. The word Simply multiple times.
White Packaging, Simple Ingredients
wording, image
image of sweet potatoes, simple bag
clean package and simple imagery
Simple, clean packaging, earth tones
name implies that it's better for you and sweet potatoes are supposed to be a healthier alternative
name, simple background
showing REAL sweet potatoes and simple/clean packaging
The phrase "Way Better" and the use of Sweet Potatoes seems to indicate this is a healthy snack.
font, color, simplicity
Food images
'Way Better' and the raw potato
"Way Better", white background with product, GF
the minimalist design suggests pure ingredients, a focus on the sweet potato itself makes me think it will taste real and natural, the name "way better" snacks implies healthy
Way Better [for you] name on white background
SIMPLY, WHITE PACKAGING, INGREDIENT PROPPING
clean design, actual veggie, branding all points to natural/organic presentation
The name and root gave it away.
simplicity, color, image
the image of the slice potatoes
Logo and Food Shot
Language, photography, clean background.
word choices/messaging
image
image of raw sweet potato
Way better, simply, picture of a whole sweet potato
Image!
image of plain sweet potato, little sprout, close up of chip with seeds visible
wording and simple packaging
sweet potato - trendy health food
images, use of text "way better" and "simply" wording
Images of whole food, font emulating handwriting
photos of healthy looking food and colors on the package
The use of "way better", "simply", picture of sweet potatoes,
image
picture of raw sweet potato
Word choice (e.g. Multiple uses of simply, etc)
Focus on "sprouted" and image of fresh sweet potato
simple, clean packaging
sweet potato and sprouts
Brand name
picture of vegetable

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	100

21. Overall, what is this package trying to communicate? Please choose one answer.

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Taste	<div></div>	82	82%
2	Health		0	0%
3	Fun	<div></div>	11	11%
4	Premium		0	0%
5	Natural/Organic		0	0%
6	Other (Please write in answer below)	<div></div>	7	7%
	Total		100	

Other (Please write in answer below)
Unhealthy
Flavor boldness
Edgy/cool
Intense flavor
options
clashing tastes
daring

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	6
Mean	1.57
Variance	1.88
Standard Deviation	1.37
Total Responses	100

22. What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

Text Response
fire/flame
Colors, flavor
the color purple
spicy sweet
wording and the flame behind the chips implying spicyness
Font
Spicy sweet fire graphic
Image
Bright colors and graphics
those Doritos are literally on fire
Colors, spicy
Everyone knows the Doritos logo, new colors signify different flavors.
the words and image of fire
spicy! have the flames, the name, the colors, etc.
the flames shooting out of the back of the chips
font, color
The fiery chip, dorito symbol at top
Bright deep color, fire
colors and flames
flame image
The font of the product
Colors, design layout
Chili
flames
the name of the flavor and the font.
The words "spicy sweet."
Font
Color, font
Fiery background
flames to represent spice, big picture of chips, less attention to extra labels, etc as you would have in natural products
Font of "spicy and sweet", flame graphic
Flame and name
The "spicy sweet chili" is calling out what the food will taste like. People would buy this just for the taste.
Fiery Image / font
Color images font
Color scheme
Packaging
The colors, name, the font, the fire, the graphics
Image
Color
Color
The image of Doritos on fire
Fire
colors, image
The vivid colors of the yellow and purple tell me that there will be a taste explosion in my mouth!
Flame image, font
Fire image and text
flames behind the chips, colors used for the package
Big food shot is focus of package, taste cues in flame
The package is rather plain, with only the flavor and chip images present. The fire off of the chip drives home the fact that these are spicy

just another type of doritos
Images font
colors, flames, words "spicy sweet chili"
Flame
Spicy and sweet, as palate items, are not well suited together. They are very different taste characteristics.
Spicy sweet
flames coming off of the chips
Flavor is front and center. Different fonts for emphasis.
Flame, Flavor Name
Color, Imagery
fonts and fire image
flavor and fire image
flames
the different fonts imply the flavor combination
color, fire image
font used for "spicy sweet chili", large doritos pictured
Fonts used on "Spicy Sweet" are what I identify with the 18 - 30 year-old-crowd.
color and font
Image of fire behind flavor descriptor
Spicy font and flames
Text "Spicy Sweet" with the flames behind text
Spicy Sweet typographic stylization emphasizes the unique flavor
Flames and fonts
DRAMATIZED FLAVOR
tweak off original.
The visual emphasis is on the hotness of the chip.
boldness in color, font, and image
the visual heat
Product shot and flames off product
Emphasis on size of the product (and only three being used) and flavor designator.
fire and font of describing words/messagin (spicy sweet chili)
background and image
flames
Sweet/spicy, font
Image!
lack of anything on the package but image of chip + fire
picures
abnormal doritos color background
"spic sweet" text, fire image
Bright colors and aggressive fonts
Fire means spicy
Typography & changes in "spicy" "sweet" & "chili"
image
flames
Visual fire
Flame imagery, different fonts for spicy/sweet make it stand out
picture of the chips
the font and colors - elicit a gamble feeling
Flames
fire/flame

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	100

23. Overall, what is this package trying to communicate? Please choose one answer.

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Taste		0	0%
2	Health	<div></div>	41	41%
3	Fun	<div></div>	1	1%
4	Premium	<div></div>	6	6%
5	Natural/Organic	<div></div>	45	45%
6	Other (Please write in answer below)	<div></div>	7	7%
	Total		100	

Other (Please write in answer below)
Natural, but that doesn't mean organic
Wholesomeness
Trying to communicate far too many things at once
Retro- 1940s
I'm not sure
both health and natural/organic
Looks cheap

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	6
Mean	3.76
Variance	2.35
Standard Deviation	1.53
Total Responses	100

24. What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?


Text Response
forest
Colors, background
this font reminds me of all the natural/organic food my parents bought growing up!
whole grain wheat; depiction of nature via the tree
Trees
Packaging material
7g
Image-tree
Boring packaging and mom approved
visual of trees
Tree
"Mom's best." Neutral colors.
the images -- tree, wind turbine
trees ... on a cereal box with no ingredients from trees...
picture of the tree
best
trees
Background illustration, substrate
trees and nature theme
tree image and earth tones
The slogans and presentation of health facts
Font, wording, layout and background image
Mom's.....
background
the tree illustration and the font
The dominating image is of the tree and leaves.
Mom, and the emphasis on 7 grams of something good
Color, font, printed information
Tree is main design element
the word 'mom', pictures of trees, words like "BEST", wheat, etc highlighted on the front
Graphic of tree and name brand, "Mom's Best Cereals"
Phrase with all the things it doesn't contain to mKe it healthy
the tree, and darker packaging make it look more natural, however it is probably just a "natural" cereal that is no better for you than any other sugar-sweetened cereals. Good packaging!
Mom would want me to be healthy
Font words
Emphasis on no additives, whole grain count on the box front.
Logo
The graphics, the words (mom, best), the "nutrition facts" (whole grain, 7g, the wind turbines
Image
Design style
Background
Reference to 'mom' and image of a tree
Simple graphics of nature
tree
Product shot tells me it's both healthy and natural. They honey makes it sound like it tastes good. The package is trying to be premium -
Package color and image
Text
the pictures of trees and leaves
It's growing on trees. :) prominent health claims
They are called "Mom's Best" and call out "Say Yes to the Best;" Simple packaging including a tree, making a connection with wholesome/healthy ingredients

"moms"
Images colors
contemporary colors, "Mom's best", "Say yes to the best"--all says this is more expensive but worth it
Mom's Best
colors, images, and the "Mom's" all hark back to a previous age
7g
retro understated 360 degree package graphics
Message - No artificial flavors, Mom's Best cereals. Pictures of trees make me feel like it's natural/good for you
Moms Best Seal, 7g callout, natural looking packaging
Best, whole grain, imagery
neutral colors
illustration and colors
illustrations of nature, earth tones
the tree implies that it's somehow "of the earth"
background, graphics
tree in background, the fact that mom recommended it, color scheme
The trees in the background.
color and visual
Visual of tree
'Moms Best' and the tree
Nature picture, colors seem organic
Prominence of trees and natural imagery suggests to me that it is organic or made with whole food type of ingredients. Use of brown and green contributes here. Circle is shape for the callout with close up detail is pleasing and wholesome
Mom's Best [always] name and anti-establishment anti-marketing neuvo retro innocent illustration
MOM'S BEST CEREAL NAME, COLOR AND NATURE CUES
looks like a natural, healthy alternative
Trees.
color and image
kind of bland looking
Seems to convey a mixed message with no clear objective.
Attempt at creating an extremely illustrated package, and language.
nature background, wording of "mom's best cereal"
background
tree
Has to be healthy bc mom picked it
Colors, image, word usage.
tree image
moms best
'natrual' setting background
nutrition information, "say yes to the best" text, mom's choice
Earth tones, images of nature
packaging is not slick or contemporary looking
Use of phrase "mom's best", "say yes to the best"
image
stylized tree, multiple fonts/slight retro look. Seems almost hipster
The word mom.
Tree and forest image
moms best
the use of "mom" and the soft coloring and nature
Tree graphics
tree

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	100



25. Which of the three packages shown best communicates health?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	1		14	14%
2	2		8	8%
3	3		78	78%
	Total		100	

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	2.64
Variance	0.52
Standard Deviation	0.72
Total Responses	100


26. What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

Text Response
brown background
Simply wording
the coloring (blue + beige) and the green stalks on the side of the package
The word baked
health indicators across the bottom
Colors
Simply
Natural, text-simply
Word simply
images look more natural
The word:simply
"Simply"
the five circles on the bottom that presumably explain what crap is not in the chips
It appears as though there are health stats on the bottom of the bagage.
there's green leafy images on the package
simply implies natural
"simply", the fact that it's a corn chip
The symbols on the bottom
mellow colors
the word "simple"
The font and presentation of health facts
Font, wording, layout
Blur chips
large symbols
The giant BAKED
The word "simply."
image, background, and text content
Color
"Simply" makes me think there will be less artificial ingredients
softer colors, the lays logo is too bright to seem healthy
The word "Simply"
Simply- less processed
"Simply" comes across as "thing more than what you expect. Simply ingredients." That doesn't mean health, per say, but it does mean natural and that is often healthier than Baked, which includes more additives to lower calories.
"Simply" and packaging material
Font
The word "baked"
Simply
All close. Baked and Kettle cooked suggest a healthier alternative to fried or regular potato chips. But corn chips always suggest they are the healthiest. Then, the words like simply, the corn image, the blue coloring and the logos promoting "health facts" all suggest 3 is the healthiest.
Image
Package material
Simply
The corn reference and image
The leaves
wording, blue corn, simply
"kettle cooked" along with the blue package makes me think it's the most healthy.
Simple lines, image, darker blue
Package
plain packaging and lettering, picture on front
Natural color, ingredient propping, "simply" and claims at bottom

the use of the word "Simply"
"simply"
Font
picture of corn, picture of chips, brown pacakge, word "simply"
Simply callout, blue and white color
baked = no texture; kettle cooked = too much fat; blue corn suggests a stab at healthy
Baked is healthier than fried, so seeing the word "baked" makes me think "healthy".
natural color tones-tan and blue corn
The word Simply
Large Simply, Health Icons
Simply
"Simply"
the name in combination with the texture on the package say healthy to me
color choice and imagery of product
the word "simply" implies that there are minimal ingredients and therefore healthier for you
baked
color of chips that matches packaging, using the word "simply", natural color scheme
It is screaming "Baked!" which we understand to be better than deep-fried.
the communication on the package
Showing ingredients of product
'Simply'
The rough tan texture, the health call outs on the front
i like the detail of the corn itself, the big bold "simply" and the natural colored background
Baked! name prominent, which is key feature.
'SIMPLY', ICONS BELOW
tough choice between 1 and 3. I went with blue corn over potato chip
The color and name.
image, packaging material and information
maybe the Simply got to me
Presence of corn and color palette
Product photography and desaturated colors.
clean white background, I've had the brand (so I'm probably biased)
font
"simply," image of corn
Word simply, the colors, also blue corn
Image
photo of corn and x'd out bad ingredients
Simply
natural ingredients
colors & wording "simply"
Images of plants, more neutral/cool colors
green leaves on packaging
Use of term baked, no emphasis on why others would be healthier
colors
colors -- like a dr office
Baked most associated with health.
light bag color
simple equates to healthy
Baked! and simpleness of imagery
Simply
brown background

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	100

27. Which of the three packages shown best communicates health?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	1		11	11%
2	2		70	70%
3	3		19	19%
	Total		100	

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	2.08
Variance	0.30
Standard Deviation	0.54
Total Responses	100

28. What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

Text Response
see through window
Packaging
oddly it's because it's the most simple (even ugliest) that i assume it's the healthiest
The word organic
image of whole colorful ingredients
Packaging material
Superfood
Packaging, ingredients listed on front
Color and branding not associated with big food company
packaging
Packaging so you can see what's inside
Open, seedy packaging.
the bag itself
Healthier products usually have more sophisticated packaging. This stands out to me. Seems like they care about the presentation, so they care what goes into the ingredients as well.
the front of the box is shaped like a seed, which is supposed to be healthy
packaging shape new, new ingredient
list of weird grains, "superfood"
The word superfood
label says organic
shape, see-through packaging and choice ingredients listed.
Packaging shape and slogans
Image
Superfood
text at top
The heart on the package and the color of the package.
The eye-catching "superfood breakfast cereal."
Realistic images
Logo, color
You can see the food
they all do, but 2 uses 'new word (Qi'a), says 'superfood' really big, hemp, etc. so more advertising on ingredients
"superfood", "buckwheat" and "hemp"
Superfood
The "Nature's Way" logo is one I associate with health, less sweetening, and less additives.
Looks like rabbit food
Color
I have no idea what those ingredients are.
Packaging
Mostly the words: superfood, chia, buckwheat, hemp. The colors and simple layout/graphics. The 3rd party authentication seals.
Organic
Color
Color
The image of the farm land and farm in title
The seed shape
simple ingredients listed, organic symbol
Biggest product shot - makes it look very healthy instead of just telling me.
Package material
Heart Image
picture of the whole grains and not processed
"Superfood", shape of seed, ingredients/claims listed
It says "natural" right on the front in the name of the product.

never heard of it- must be healthy!
Packaging images font
white background, focus on grain shape, mentions chia, buckwheat and hemp
Name, Superfood callout, visual of seeds
Cascadia Farms label; it is hard to judge an unknown product like Qi'a, so it is a default looser
"Buckwheat and hemp". You don't usually eat those for taste, just for health.
the seed shaped graphic
Seeing the cereal, reading what's in it.
Heart Shape
Organic
bag looks premium and ingredients are listed on front of package
it doesnt appear to be big name. the simplicity of the package along with the usda organic bug say healthiest
Window allows us to see product. Color choice.
The simplicity of the design (the outline of the grain is brilliant), the ingredients listed and the font used
name, graphics
the ability to see the product through the packaging, using the word "superfood"
Strangely, the shape of the egg does it for me.
color and visual
Seeing the product in it's simple form
'Super Food' , Qi,a out of the ordinary name, looks natural thru the window.
Seems more natural in it's form and can see the product.
logo looks healthy, white minimalist background suggests pure ingredients, grown and green color scheme seems natural and healthy
You can see the bird seed, and if you eat bird seed like a bird you'll be light as a feather.
'NATURAL'
tough choice between 2 and 3, but thought the funky name, packaging and materials gave it the edge.
The other two have bowls. Other cereals can go into bowls, too. i.e. Trix, Cookie Crisp, etc
packaging shape and image
I think the fact you can get a clear visual of the grain/fruit
Cleanliness of packaging
Cleanliness of design.
number 2 should actually win for health (as it probably is given the ingredients, but the visual doesn't capture this). the clean background, simple bowl, "organic" best capture this. Cascadian Frams (to me) is healthier than Quaker as a brand.
background
bold image of nature
Logo, colors, word farm and organic
Font, word choice.
photo of gross-looking (thus probably healthy) cereal
heart
superfood
organic
Image of a farm, cool/neutral colors, images of recognizable food products
nature scene
Use of "super food" & ingredients look to be gluten free
image
color combo - like Red Cross = healthy
Ingredients
Image of actual cereal through the bag--can see what's in it
organic
all do!, the heart shape around granola
Large natural
see through window

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	100

29. Which of the three packages shown best communicates health?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	1	<div><div></div></div>	29	29%
2	2	<div><div></div></div>	26	26%
3	3	<div><div></div></div>	45	45%
	Total		100	

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	2.16
Variance	0.72
Standard Deviation	0.85
Total Responses	100

30. What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

Text Response
cows
Plain design
i mean, none of these since they are packed with sugar, but again the colors (more natural, less bright) suggest health
Visually it's the most appealing and feels natural and healthy
USDA certified organic seal
Color
0%
Simple design, green color
Because I like fage the best and honey is natural
for me it was brand recognition
Picture of blueberry
White, simple packaging.
organic labeling!
Simple, sophisticated design. Makes me think the ingredients are simple too, and I think simple ingredinets are way better than all of those chemicals
blue berry and an open field of green
natural ingredient claims
simpler packaging
I don't really think any of them do
farm setting on label
color, the organic label
Slogan
Background image
Natural ingredients
text on top
The green being used and the image of the fem and the sky
The background farm image.
Most serious looking label. That probably doesn't make sense to anyone but me.
Logo, color
Organic symbol
#2 could do much better, the 0% is lost in the font. #3 maybe for the color of sky and green?
2% rather than 0% fat
Brand
Fage is a brand I associate with no additives, which I consider "healthier."
Background /organic
Text
The outdoor scene
0% Fat
Big 0%. The honey as a natural sweetener. The white color since that would be the closest color to its original form. But all are close (words like all natural and USDA organic.) 3 is a close 2nd.
Image
Color
Color
The background and fruit image
The farm imagery
font
Chobani as a brand tells me it's healthy. Because I'm familiar with the brand, I tend to believe what they tell me on the package. It looks simple like there aren't a lot of additives.
colors
Organic logo
picture on the carton, colors of sky and grass
White background, clean design, "natural", shows ingredient



The honey spoon communicates nature; it calls out "0%"
image
Packing, colors imges
simple background and picture of fruit; "only natural ingredients, no picture of honey or cows
Blue Sky
blueberries signify healthy eating; Fage shows honey added (more sugar); chobani has to add sugar to make lime edible
0% fat
clean design communicates "healthy", fit, well put together
Doesn't make sense - I like the 'less is more', clean look to the design.
Simple Clean White, ONLY NATURAL INGREDIENT Callout
Only natural ingredients
green grass and cow
clean package, simple imagery
Clean and simple, easy to read.
simplicity of design, good use of color and appealing image of fruit
background
clean lines, white space, "ONLY NATURAL INGREDIENTS"
The honey caught my eye. We know yougurt comes from cows, so that image didn't add to the concept.
visual and color
Visual of ingredients
Euro, simple
Simple greek equals healthy and 2% call out
farm imagery
Green cow eyeing giant blueberry
SIMPLICITY, FLAVOR CUE
0% on Fage
Blueberries are the most healthy.
fresh and bright
total 0%
Cleanliness of packaging
Background elements that tell a story.
white/clean package, simple ingredient, bold brand name (again, biased as I'm a chobani buyer)
image
image of honey
USDA organic loga, whole bblueberry
Packaging and image.
lack of background image looks more natural
farm
farm, organic
simple, natural background imaging, blueberry image
Simple label with whole ingredient
outside scene
"Only natural ingredients"
image
white package, more open font, picture of limes
Green color
farm image
0%
blueberry image w/ the sky
Fruit graphic
white background

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	100

31. Which of the three packages shown best communicates health?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	1	<div></div>	69	69%
2	2	<div></div>	21	21%
3	3	<div></div>	10	10%
	Total		100	

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	1.41
Variance	0.45
Standard Deviation	0.67
Total Responses	100

32. What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

Text Response
fruits
Colors
none of these really, but the welch's and mott's are really busy packaging, making me think of fast food
depiction of actual fruit on the packaging
"Real Fruits"
Image
Real fruit, fat free
Text- organic
It says organic
says organic...and I know the brand
Organic
Brand, but beyond that the ugly packaging.
Annie's brand itself (organic)
I just love Annie's and have lots of experience with that brand.
pictures of real fruit on the package
organic claim
ugly packaging
Only because I know the products would I choose 1, they are equal in looks to me
label says organic
none. it's Annie's reputation as a better brand.
Name and packaging
Layout and font
Organic
text
because of the word organic. nothing about the fonts, colors, etc does health for me.
The fruit image.
Annie's bc it says organic.
Color
Not sure
pictures of fruit, still fun but less bright than Annie's (which is the organic one)
"Organic", and the Annie's brand
Organic
Although I wish there was a "none" button, the Annie's brand is one I associate with natural, and therefore a healthier option if you HAD to buy fruit snacks.
Organic
Name
The word organic
Organic
Organic. And Annie's the brand is synonymous with healthy.
Image
Image
Brand
It's a familiarity thing...the brand
Simple imagery
packaging
I've grown up with 2 and 3 - they seem less healthy just because I assume they both have high fructose corn syrup. Annie's organic sounds better for my kids. Hopefully they'll like the taste.
The least flashy
Fruit pictures
2 and 3 have too many images on the package and not enough plain space
Claims, real photography, white banner
they show real fruit on the front of the package, rather than images of a fruit snack

reputation
Font packaging
pictures of fruit, fat free
Organic
2 is the best of that bunch, but none of them communicates health. Colors are intended to attract a kid's attention
"Organic"
box versus plastic packages
Organic. Brand recognition - Annie's seems more healthy.
Organic callout
Annie's Organic
"organic"
although the name itself doesn't say healthy to me, the colors and images of fruit say otherwise
The word "organic"
pictures of real fruit and the actual product shown on white gives visual clue that product is the same as real fruit
organic
Association of Annie's products with the image and reputation of healthy and organic foods
The prominence of the "Fruit Snacks" cuts through the design. The others are quite busy and you have to work to find the information.
color
Visual of fruit
Think of Annie's as being a natural line of products
Says Organic would look at that one first
bunny logo, word "organic"
Hedious design has a face only a mother could love
WELCH'S BRAND HERITAGE AND FRUIT PROPPING
Organic, not to mention the off- factory brand.
The animal.
least candy looking, image and packaging material
organic
Simply message, clearly delivered.
Depiction of real fruit. However, if I could choose none of the above I would.
I buy organic/natural foods and know to trust Annie's over Welch/Mott's - none of the packaging seem to demonstrate health in a great way.
background
fruit
Probably bc I know the brand, word organic
Packaging and word use.
none really, I just associated Annie's brand most with healthy food
brands of the latter not synonymous with health
i know annie's is organic
fruit imagery
Images of whole foods
Better pictures of fruit
"Organic"
image
I'm familiar with Annie's product so I'm a bit biased -- the color, font and name "Annie's" tells me that it's organic -- organic = toxin free = good health
Brand association
brand recognition
organic
the images of the fruit
Fruit graphics
fruit illustration

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	100

33. Which of the three packages shown best communicates health?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	1	<div></div>	15	15%
2	2	<div></div>	81	81%
3	3	<div></div>	4	4%
	Total		100	

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	1.89
Variance	0.18
Standard Deviation	0.42
Total Responses	100

34. What visual characteristic (font, colors, image, background, packaging material or packaging shape, etc.) best explains the reason for your answer above?

Text Response
farm
No preservatives banner
i associate annie's with healthier brands so that's hard to separate
"organic"
picture showing farm
Image
Tomato in nature graphic
Vines, simplicity
Clean white labeling
brand recognition
The brand
Brand - but that's it.
Annie's brand
I just know and trust Annie's already.
The fact that it's Annie's and I'm familiar with their products and it shows the tomato in the field.
no preservatives, hunts 100% natural
slimmer bottle shape, white and green on packaging
The green? I don't think ketchup is "healthy" from anywhere
farm setting on label
color, brand recognition
The image and font
Image
Organic
green label
the simplicity of the hanging tomato.
The background farm image.
Annie's "organic" and farm-y label
Logo
Organic symbol, colors look more natural
looks more natural in color, including font and pictures on front
Again, "organic" and the Annie's brand
Organic- know the brand
Ketchup is not healthier, and therefore NONE would be the right answer, but I associate Annie's with natural and less additives and therefore a "healthier" option.
Background/organic
Name
The word organic, the small brand.
Brand
Unfortunately Heinz even though Annie's is probably better. Heinz is so ingrained in our history and suggests a bygone time when things were simpler, more honest and more authentic. So, naturally, their ketchup comes directly from the tomato plant (and not crushed up insects.)
Wording
Color
Brand
Again, familiarity of brand
Hand drawn tomatoes
image
I mean, in the end, they're all ketchup. "Health" might be stretching it a little.
image, simple package
Tomato farm pic
picture and that it says organic
White label, organic, clear bottle shows more natural colored product
The imagery has a stronger connection to nature

reputation
Images colors
the word "organic" and the picture of a tomato and a farm
Organic/Brand
The retro farm labeling harks back to simple, healthy farm produce
"Organic"
image on label
Bigger label, more white. Picture of a tomato.
Organic callout
Annie's Organic
"organic" label on top and farm image
mostly that its not big name
The word "organic"
illustration of farm and BIG tomato implies "fresh from the farm" not from a factory
background graphics
Association of Annie's products with the image and reputation of healthy and organic foods
It is different from what we know to be the norm in ketchup, therefore, someone is trying to capitalize on the natural or healthier approach. Weak, I know, but that's how my brain works.
image and color
Simple font surrounded by natural ingredients
Think of Annie's as being a natural line of products. The other two I would think they have additives and sweeteners.
says Organic, look smore homeade
green label at the top suggests a health choice to me, i would notice it when shown with other products
Brand name and pseudo organic illustration
ANNIE'S BRAND NAME
don't think of hunts and heinz as health.
Annie's = organic
photo rather than illustration - freshness
the farm visual
Cleanliness of packaging
Cleanliness of design.
they all rank the same of choosing "health" based off packaging, again, I chose Annie's due to brand quality / reputation to being a "healthy/organic/natural" product over heinz/hunts
image
farm imagery
The brand name Annie's
Packaging, image and word choice.
simple tomato graphic
brand recognition
naturally grown photo
Images, ketchup color (not as artificial)
Simple packaging, uncluttered image of a whole food
fresh tomato on label
"Natural"
image
I'm biased toward the annies brand
Brand association
farm image
organic
green vine w/ the tomato
White label
picture of vegetable garden

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	100

## STUDY 2: VISUAL COMPLEXITY AND PERSUASIVE EFFECTS

### *RESULTS*



Respondent # \_\_\_\_

## **Respondent Worksheet – AUTO ADS**

*Please read each question and circle the answer that best fits the question, and cross out the answer that least fits.*

**Q1: Which ad grabs your attention the best?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

**Q2: Which ad is the easiest to understand?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

**Q3: Which ad is most likely to make you interested in the brand or product?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

**Q4: Which ad makes you want to purchase the product?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

**Q5: Which ad do you prefer overall?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

Respondent # \_\_\_\_

## **Respondent Worksheet – COSMETIC ADS**

*Please read each question and circle the answer that best fits the question, and cross out the answer that least fits.*

**Q1: Which ad grabs your attention the best?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

**Q2: Which ad is the easiest to understand?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

**Q3: Which ad is most likely to make you interested in the brand or product?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

**Q4: Which ad makes you want to purchase the product?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

**Q5: Which ad do you prefer overall?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

Respondent # \_\_\_\_

## Respondent Worksheet – DISH SOAP ADS

*Please read each question and circle the answer that best fits the question, and cross out the answer that least fits.*

**Q1: Which ad grabs your attention the best?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

**Q2: Which ad is the easiest to understand?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

**Q3: Which ad is most likely to make you interested in the brand or product?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

**Q4: Which ad makes you want to purchase the product?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

**Q5: Which ad do you prefer overall?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3

Respondent # \_\_\_\_

Of all 9 ads, please choose the ad you preferred overall and answer:

1) In your own words, please *describe* what's going on in the picture.

2) Please tell me your *opinions and feelings* about what's going on in this picture.

3) What do you think the *advertiser was trying to communicate* with the picture in this particular ad?

4) What kinds of *evidence* can you identify in the picture to support your ideas *about what the advertiser tried to communicate*?

5) Why is this ad preferred over the others?

# Research 2: Visual Metaphor

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## Respondent Results



1

2

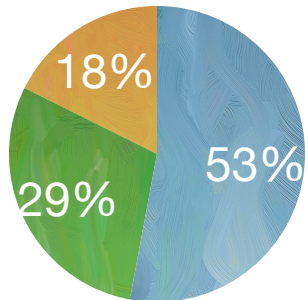
# Auto Ads



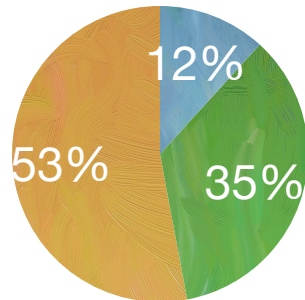
3

# AUTO ADS - Best answers question

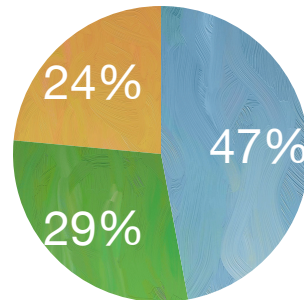
Which advertisement grabs your attention the best?



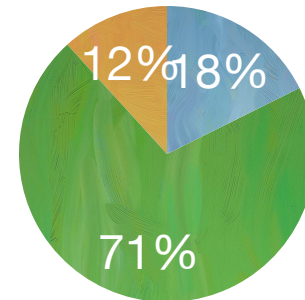
Which advertisement is the easiest to understand?



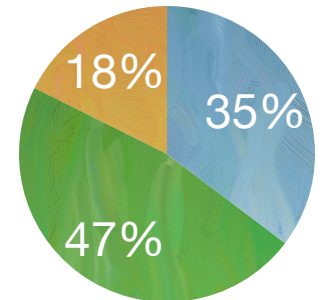
Which advertisement is most likely to make you interested in the product?



Which advertisement makes you want to purchase the product?



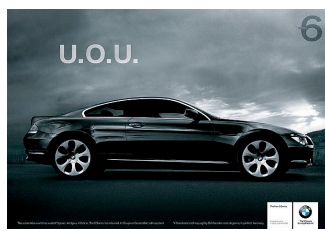
Which advertisement do you prefer overall?



● Ad 1

● Ad 2

● Ad 3



## Summary

Audi ad tells a story about their heritage that grabs attention through use of visual metaphor, and makes respondents interested in the product.

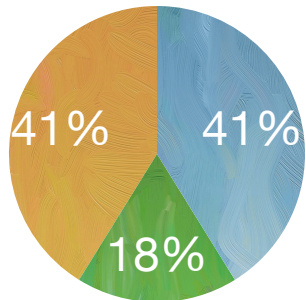
BMW ad does not use visual metaphor but employs aesthetic sex appeal and clever copy to entice respondents to want to purchase the product and prefer overall.

Jeep's literal approach is easiest to understand, but does not have persuasive effects.

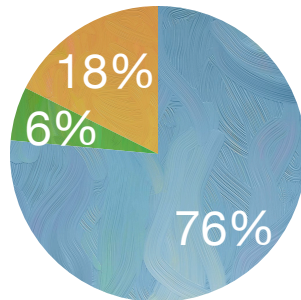


# AUTO ADS - Least answers question

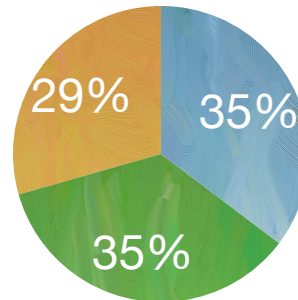
Which advertisement does not grab your attention?



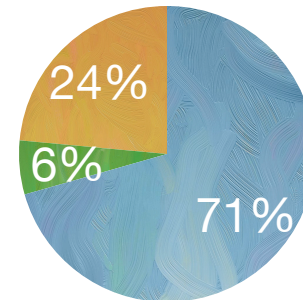
Which advertisement is the hardest to understand?



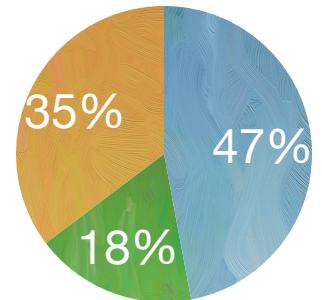
Which advertisement is least likely to make you interested in the product?



Which advertisement does not make you want to purchase the product?



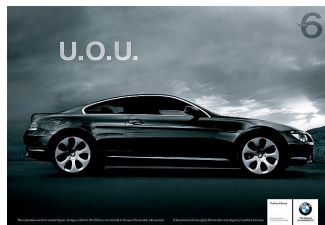
Which advertisement do you least prefer?



Ad 1

Ad 2

Ad 3



## Summary

Audi ad has a difficult time grabbing attention, communicating its benefit clearly, persuading purchase and was liked least overall.

BMW had the lowest percentages across these categories overall, reflecting its clarity in message and product appeal.

Jeep did not grab respondents' attention and was second least-preferred.





1

# Cosmetic Ads

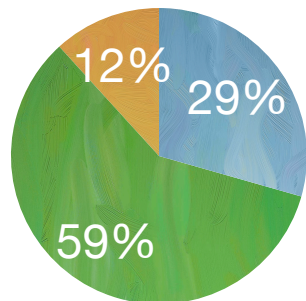


2

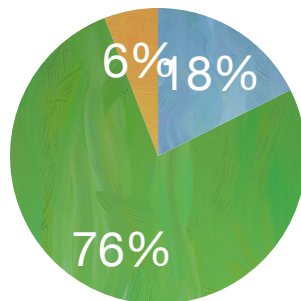
3

# COSMETIC ADS - Best answers question

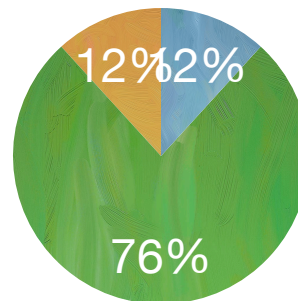
Which advertisement grabs your attention the best?



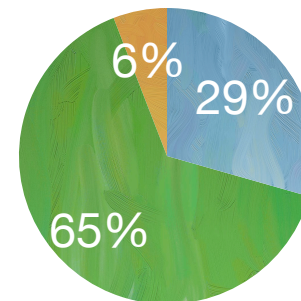
Which advertisement is the easiest to understand?



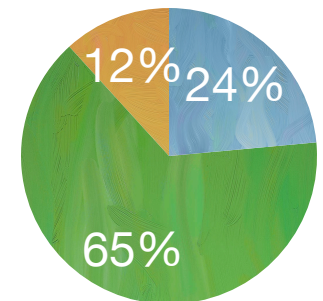
Which advertisement is most likely to make you interested in the product?



Which advertisement makes you want to purchase the product?



Which advertisement do you prefer overall?



● Ad 1



● Ad 2



● Ad3



## Summary

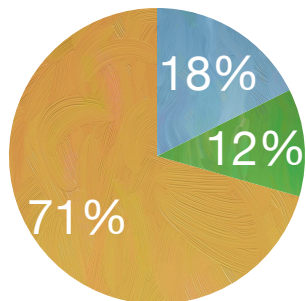
Lancome ad had the second highest marks across the categories, behind Clinique. It's ad did not use visual metaphor, but like the BMW ad used aesthetics and sex appeal.

Clinique had the highest marks across the categories and employed a high degree of visual metaphor.

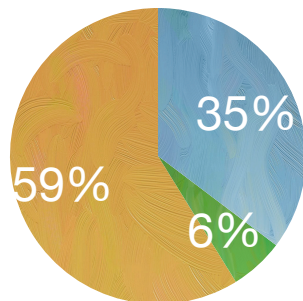
Maybelline had the lowest marks across the categories. The ad was more literal in showing a fashion forward model/makeup for fashion week.

# COSMETIC ADS - Least answers question

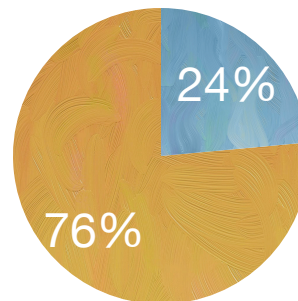
Which advertisement does not grab your attention?



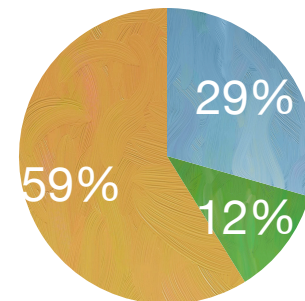
Which advertisement is the hardest to understand?



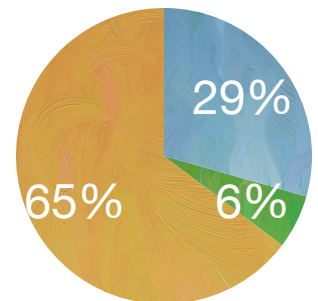
Which advertisement is least likely to make you interested in the product?



Which advertisement does not make you want to purchase the product?



Which advertisement do you least prefer?



● Ad 1



● Ad 2



● Ad 3



## Summary

These findings reflect the answers found on the previous page. The Maybelline ad had the lowest marks across all categories.





1

**method**  
DISH SOAP  
natural concentrated  
dish wash liquid  
clementine | clémentine  
liquide à vaisselle concentré naturel  
330ml (10 FL OZ)

**Works Faster than Ten Puppies to a Bowl of Pudding.**

When you're face to face with a sink full of dishes, who are you going to call? How about Method dish soap with its ultra grease fighting biodegradable formula. It's more powerful than a bottle of sodium hypochlorite, yet super gentle with its environmentally compatible colorants and high quality, non-toxic, perfumer crafted fragrances. So don't hide the dish soap under the sink any longer. With all of its powers combined Method dish soap is able to clean those dirty dishes in one fell swoop. Visit our site [methodhome.com](http://methodhome.com) to learn more.

**m method**  
people against dirty..

2

Dish  
Ads

**SQUEAKY  
CLEAN.**  
Not stinky clean.

You have to clean, so why not make the very best of it? Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day® household cleaners are made with **plant-derived** ingredients and essential oils that are **POWERFUL** against dirt and grime, but leave your home smelling like a garden, not a hospital. If there was a more pleasant way to get the same amount of clean, why wouldn't you? Learn more at [MRSMEYERS.COM](http://MRSMEYERS.COM)

**MRS. MEYER'S CLEAN DAY**  
ANTHRAPEUTIC Household Cleaners  
Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day provides hardworking, non-toxic cleaning power and essential oils that are tough on dirt, yet gentle on your home & the earth.

**LEMON VERBENA**  
SCENT  
Intergoings  
in essential  
to PLEASANT  
What more could  
ask for?

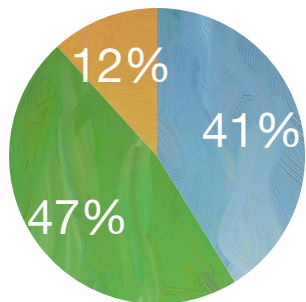
**LIQUID DISH SOAP**  
16 FLUID OUNCES 473ml

LAVENDER BASIL GERANIUM LEMON VERBENA

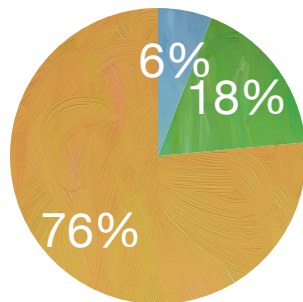
3

# DISH SOAP ADS - Best answers question

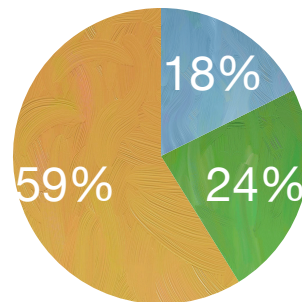
Which advertisement grabs your attention the best?



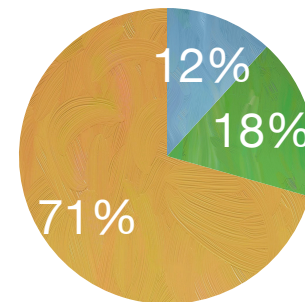
Which advertisement is the easiest to understand?



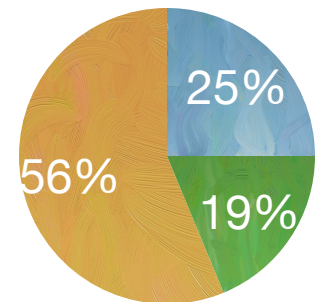
Which advertisement is most likely to make you interested in the product?



Which advertisement makes you want to purchase the product?



Which advertisement do you prefer overall?



Ad 1



Ad 2



Ad 3



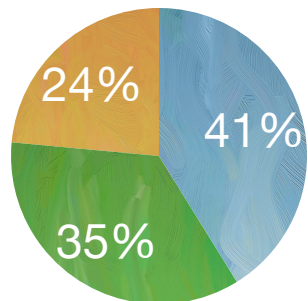
## Summary

While the Cascade and Method ad were more likely to grab attention than the Mrs. Meyer's ad, Mrs. Meyer's rated higher in the other categories.

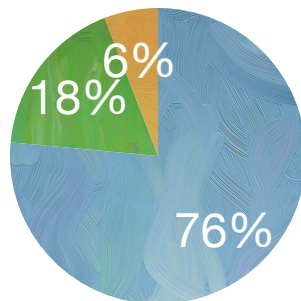
The Cascade ad used a high degree of visual metaphor and the Method ad used a simpler visual metaphor. Mrs. Meyer's used a low degree of visual metaphor.

# DISH SOAP ADS - Least answers question

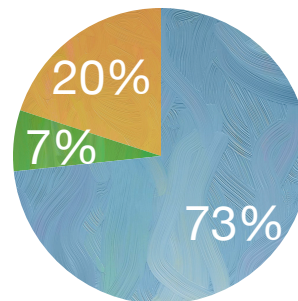
Which advertisement does not grab your attention?



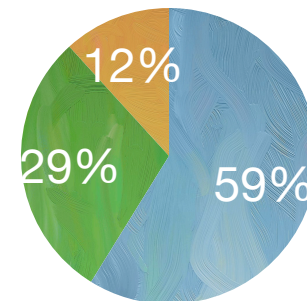
Which advertisement is the hardest to understand?



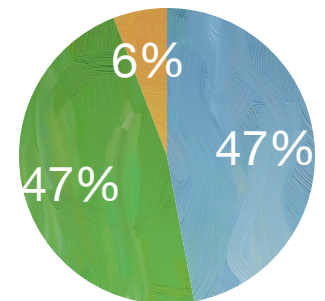
Which advertisement is least likely to make you interested in the product?



Which advertisement does not make you want to purchase the product?



Which advertisement do you least prefer?



Ad 1



Ad 2



Ad 3



## Summary

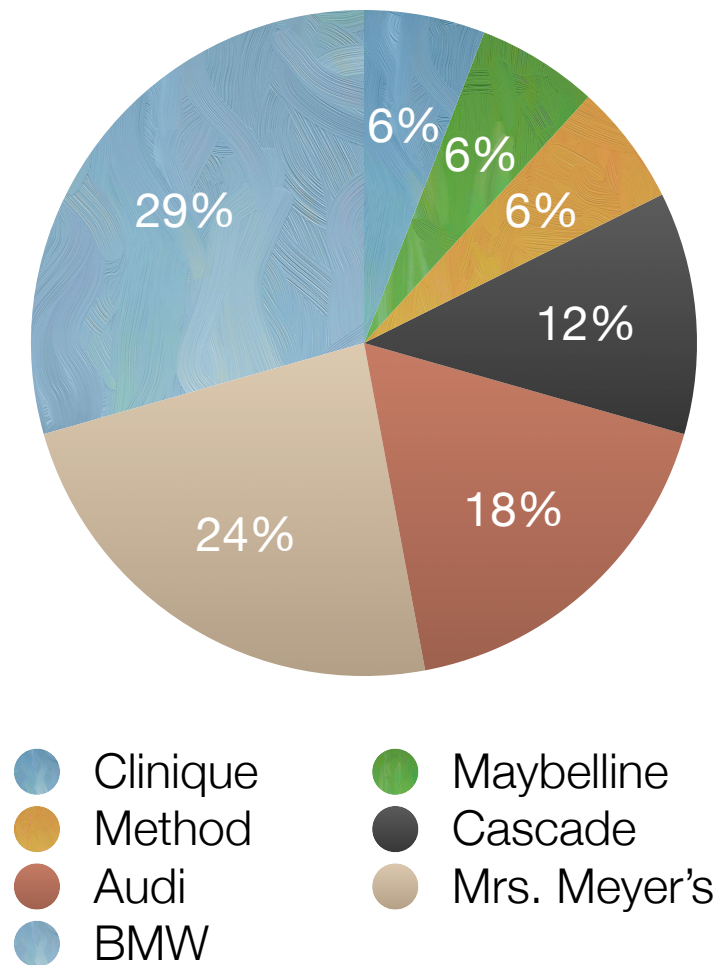
The Cascade ad was, overall, ranked lowest across categories. Method had better marks than Cascade - but not by much - in attention and preferred overall.



# Overall Preferred Advertisements

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- Reasons the ad was preferred:
- **Clinique:** Easiest message to understand and most relevant
- **Method:** Entertaining
- **Audi:** Visually tells a story
- **BMW:** I love the brand; Car is cool looking; Simple; Sexy; Appealing product
- **Maybelline:** Eye catching and captivating
- **Cascade:** Clever
- **Mrs. Meyer's:** Visually shows the life I want; Pleasant; Relevant; Clearest; Easiest to understand



## STUDY 3: IN-DEPTH EXECUTIVE INTERVIEWS

### *RESULTS*



### Research 3: In-depth Interviews

#### Transcripts of Interview Notes

Five people of varying roles within agency-client projects involving visual communication were interviewed for 30-45 minutes each, individually. Each interviewee had a different set of questions that were tailored to their specific role within a visual communication project, and their responsibilities for the success of such a project.

#### **Questions for Kate Barton, Marketing Manager at General Mills**

*Summary: Design's role is to get the consumer to engage with the advertising, and communicate the consumer insight and key message. Use the consumer mindset to explain the design and the context it will be seen in, and make recommendations based on the consumer's perspective.*

- 1) Design has to walk a fine line between being intuitively "right" and strategically "correct" – do you find yourself evaluating design on a more subjective intuitive level, or are you looking at the strategy of each element within the design – its color, shapes, weight of elements, etc.?

- a. Do you look at design holistically, or piece meal?

Looks at the design holistically, using the one/two-second test to view it the way the consumer would view it. Evaluate the design based on whether the design hits on the consumer insight and conveys the key message.

- 2) When you are evaluating design, are you thinking like the marketer or the consumer? Or is there a balance of both perspectives?

View it as the consumer would, and ask why would they engage or care about this design or message. Understanding and fulfilling on the consumer relevancy is the future of brand marketing, and design executes the insight and message with a laser focus. The YouTube parody video (via 2006) of how Microsoft would design an Apple iPod package shows where marketers can go astray, because they want to communicate everything; what matters is the message you give consumers to get them to engage in the big picture. Tee things up with the lens of the consumer within the context they would encounter it in.

- 3) When agency partners are presenting design to you, do you have expectations of what they will say or share with you to explain their perspective or designs?

- a. Do you wish agency partners had a different approach to what you currently experience, with regard to sharing visual work?

Less transactional relationships, and more strategic relationships with agencies would be better. Success is too often defined by how agency work delivers on the brief that was given to them, as a way to prove the value of the work. Some concerns in working with agencies is that beautiful design is top of mind for designers but sometimes beautiful doesn't express the right message. Every design should be grounded in the business objective, insight, and key message and fit the brand personality. I would like to see more recommendations given after presentations, grounded in the consumer insight with a consumer mindset.

- 4) How important is consumer testing in your evaluation/choice of design?

There are pros and cons to consumer research, and each marketer approaches it differently. The major difference in approach to consumer research is the tactical versus intuitive marketer – the tactical marketer will look at the data for the answer, whereas the intuitive marketer will look at the data to validate a decision. That there will influence the role of consumer research. When conducting consumer research, you have to be thoughtful about what you ask...junk in, junk out...and be aware of who you're talking to and what their incentive for participating in the research is.

### **Questions for Cari Mosher, Brand Design at General Mills**

*Summary: There are many factors that go into making a strategic visual design decision – Brand-able, Stop-able/Shop-able/Find-able, and Design objectives – that represent the many factors that go into a consumer finding and purchasing a product. It is the agency's role to understand these factors and when presenting design, to have a clear perspective on HOW and WHY the design best fits the strategy and to communicate that to the marketing team.*

- 1) What is your role within the agency-marketing relationship?

Design management of the process and deliverables for solving problems visually for marketers. I interpret and translate the creative design to business marketers.

- 2) When you evaluate design, what are the criteria you use?

Brandable, Stopable/shopable/findable, and Design Objectives

- 3) When you are evaluating design, do you evaluate it using the brand design, marketing, or consumer lens?

All three using the criteria above. Brandable = marketing;  
Stopable/Shopable/Findable = Consumer; Design objectives = Brand Design.

- 4) How important is consumer testing in your evaluation – or choice – of design?

Importance depends on the scope of the project and the level of risk. As the risk gets higher (like changing a behavior or having major news), you need more strategy and consumer insight so they can confirm or contradict your hypothesis. The Tropicana redesign is a great example of high risk needing consumer validation to make sure your package is still representing what the consumer looks for in your brand. It would make sense to create a hierarchy or matrix of risk level with corresponding objectives to better understand what research should tell you. Respondents can't always articulate what you need or want to hear, but asking the right questions with a clear idea of what you want to get out of testing will help that. In some cases, you need to pretest new design with the old design to get a firm understanding of how consumers shop your package; you can use the pretest as a benchmark to create smart questions. Research needs clear metrics and objectives so we know what we'll get out of it. We have to be okay with parity and set a hierarchy of objectives.

- 5) What are your thoughts on intuition versus strategy, with regard to design?

Higher risk needs consumer research and strategy (as well as time) versus lower risk can rely more on intuition and move faster.

- 6) When agency partners are presenting design, do you have expectations of what they will say or share with you to explain their perspective?
- a. Do you wish agency partners had a different approach to what you currently experience, with regard to sharing visual work?

Agency should lead with a clear point of view to sell marketing on a clear path forward; they should take the decision out of marketing's hands and that would remove the subjectivity of design choice. Clearly articulate the HOW and WHY design works better than the other to fulfill on the three criteria discussed earlier. The agency is the expert and their job is to get marketing to understand why a specific design works better than the others. Brand Design is not tied to either side, and represents a more objective opinion if either side is moving off of the strategy. And there is always consumer testing to validate opinions.

- 7) What defines a successful or unsuccessful (design) project? Is there a turning point in the process where it goes “right” or “wrong”?

The perfect project has all decision makers invested in the project from the beginning and come along for the entire project and decisions. If the decisions makers aren't in presentations, they don't hear the HOW and WHY and make subjective design decisions. Or, if they are misaligned on objectives, degree of change, or new information comes in – all of these lead to potential project failure. When new information comes into the project (either from research, or leadership), all parties involved must pivot, and be thoughtful about how they pivot and take the time to go back to the strategy and revisit/rebuild the strategy.

### **Questions for Sharon Gorney, Vice President Brand Strategy at Ultra Creative**

*Summary: Marketing finds the problem and our job is to visually solve it in a consumer facing/friendly way. The way we solve it must be on strategy, and we must communicate how the design meets the strategy in a way our clients will understand. The way we visually solve for problems should not just be about the business objectives, though – we are solving the problem for the consumer and have to use that lens and rationale.*

- 1) Design is in a funny position where it is sometimes asked to decorate a bad idea, or you see it fail a really great idea due to poor execution. I think of the main reason behind both of those scenarios happening is because design is not thought of as being objective and strategic, rather, being subjective and aesthetic. What are your thoughts around “design gone wrong” situations – why they happen and what we can do to fix them?

Design has an element of intuition to it, and the mathematical or data-driven perspective of strategy has replaced some of that intuition. Strategy really relates to the consumer perspective of how they view the brand and what will get them to purchase the product, and design intuition has a hand in answering that. We should listen to designers as to what is good design, and not think that strategy can answer the problem. Consumers aren't thinking through design the way we are, so it's important to keep that perspective. With that said, I'm not recommending throwing out strategy or the business problem, but making a

case that intuition should be a part of the strategy + design + marketing equation, but it's been lost a bit.

- 2) From a designer's standpoint, too much strategy can get in the way of intuition. What are your thoughts around intuition versus strategy?
  - a. How much explanation should be demanded of designers?
  - b. How much strategic detail needs to be explained to clients?

Intuition is the designer's job, but it needs to be managed and evaluated internally (by strategists and account managers) before going to the client to ensure it meets the strategy. While we need to always make sure design is on strategy, it is important to keep an open mind and make sure we're giving clients a range of work that opens up new possibilities or ways of looking at how to solve a visual problem.

- 3) How much does visual literacy play a part of making strategic design decisions? Our clients don't always listen to our recommendations, and sometimes change the original design's intent to a point where it isn't strategic anymore. Is this part of the job, or would a heavier strategic hand help our clients become more visually literate?

Our visual perspective is important to explain to clients so they understand our point of view and how the design came to be. Our job is to tie design to their strategy in a holistic way and explain why it works.

- 4) What can we do to provide more strategic visual value to our clients?

We can't just spit back the marketing strategy to prove the value of the work. We come in with design strategy perspectives; our unique value comes from not thinking like our clients and what we have to say should be differentiated by our design perspective. It's about visually solving the problem. Marketing finds the problem, and we solve it in a consumer-facing way.

### **Questions for Kyle Jensen, Vice President Design at Ultra Creative**

*Summary: Design works hard to convey personality and emotion for a brand to connect to its audience, and it's important to preserve that in the design process when working with clients. Design has to meet their objectives, but it also has to make sense to the consumer in the world they live in.*

- 1) What information is essential for you to begin design?

I need to know the target, medium, and how far I can take the design. These things indicate the personality and emotion of the design, which are the most important aspects of design.

2) When you hear the word 'strategy' what comes to mind?

a. How does it fit or not fit with design's role?

Strategy is the overarching reason to do what we're going to do – it's our purpose. Strategy is also highly visual because we can say more in what we show versus what we say. Strategy often fits with what we're doing, but sometimes subjectivity gets in the way – marketers are too close to their brand or judge design based on their opinion versus trend or audience, etc.

3) What is the role of intuition versus strategy in design?

Oftentimes doesn't mesh. Design intuition can be based on how long we've been working with a brand, in which case it can work because we're making design decisions based in making connections to a brand, but intuition can also be resting on our laurels and not keeping pace with trends. Or, intuition is just plain common sense about what works and what doesn't, and that is difficult to explain sometimes.

4) What factors make a design project successful versus unsuccessful?

Some would say that a design is successful if the client buys it, or successful if the consumer buys it. I think if the designer, client, and consumer are all happy, then it's a win. Ultimately, if the design is still pleasing but meets the strategy, then a project is successful.

5) What is Ultra's opportunity when it comes to visual strategy with clients?

a. Is there a different approach or process Ultra can do?

b. Is there something different the marketer can do?

Push and educate clients by using our expertise. Help them step away from their brands by sharing trends, news, and design perspectives. If we can give them a fresh perspective that is relevant, and they keep an open mind, then we can create better design.

### **Questions for Steve Wehrenberg, Director of the M.A. Strategic Communications Program at the University of Minnesota**

*Summary: Visuals are important to communications campaigns, and should be rooted in the brand's archetype and persona. Design has the power to articulate*

*a solution, but it also has the power to create broader meaning for a brand and should always be telling a story that leads to an emotional connection.*

- 1) How important are visuals to a strategic communications campaign? How much power does design have to impact a campaign?
  - a. Design can be used to decorate a bad idea, or design can be so poorly executed that it fails a great idea. How should strategic communicators address this?

Visuals are hugely important to advertising strategy and creative development. The visual solution has to tell a story and lead to a visceral or emotional connection, which it can do because visuals communicate more meaning than words. And in a global, faster-paced world, visuals can communicate more quickly to more people on a broader scale.

- 2) At what point should design be addressed in the formation of a strategic communication campaign?
  - a. What is design's role in a strategic communication campaign?

There is some tension between when to draw the line between strategy and the generation of big ideas, and who owns what...strategists want creatives to execute to a purpose, but creatives often want the room to explore

In the case of Nike, the symbol/logo design really came first and infused meaning into the brand. The power of design is difficult to articulate and we should be open to how design focuses strategy. Generally speaking, the archetype and brand persona never change, so the visual identity should derive from there, and fit on a visceral level. The character of the brand – its brand identity – should remain stable, but can wear different outfits so to speak so it can stand out in a specific medium to convey news, like in a campaign. In the example of the campaign, the brand identity visually helps launch the campaign visual, which can be flexible to communicate the news.

- 3) There is no visual design component to the M.A. Strategic Communication Program – should or could there be?
  - a. How important are design considerations for the general strategic communicator (say, at the U) versus those working within a visually heavy field (say, at Campbell Mithun)?
  - b. Is there a benchmark of how visually literate strategists should be?

A benchmark would be good, since public relations is so word based and our culture has dramatically shifted to a visual one. There is no intent to integrate

visual communication into our program – we leave that area to be explored by students via their electives – but there should be a benchmark for how we understand the power of visuals in our strategic communication campaigns.

- 4) Within the world of advertising, how is the strategic communicator different from the marketer at General Mills, the planner at Saatchi & Saatchi, the art director at Campbell Mithun?

Strategic communications is in the middle – it keeps everyone focused on the audience response and keeps the team from sabotaging the work. Oversee and make the links between creative and brands and consumers.



## VISUAL COMMUNICAITON PLAN

## **COMMUNICATIONS BRIEF**

**CLIENT:** Client Name

**CLIENT CONTACT:** Client Contact Name

**ACCOUNT PERSON:** Account Person Name

**JOB NAME:** Job Name and Number

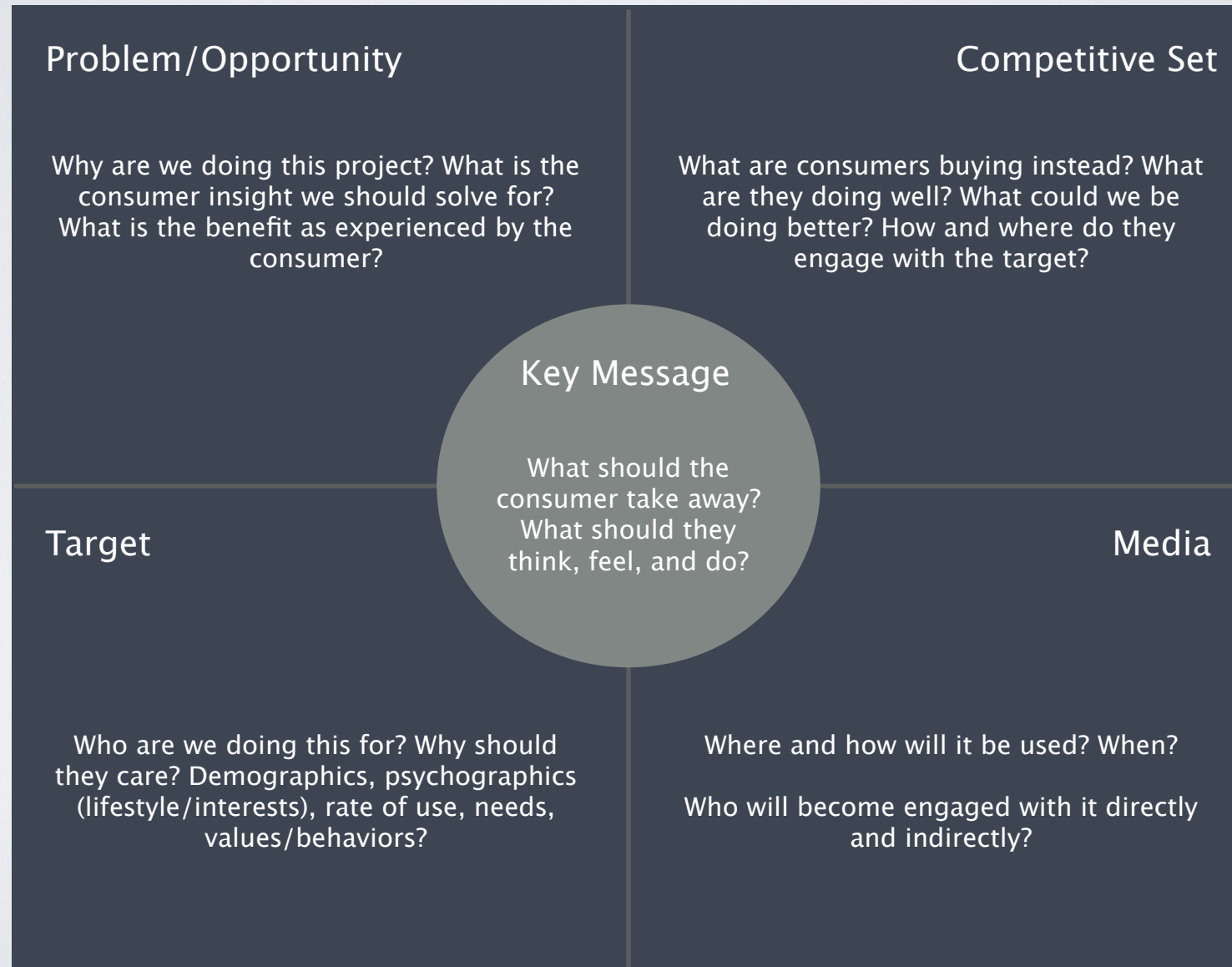
**SCOPE:** Scope Description

**DATE:** Date

## COMMUNICATIONS BRIEF

**Desired Response:** What are we asking them to do? Switch brands? Try a new product? Come back to the brand? Reinforce loyalty? Increase rate of use? Take a single action?

**Driver:** Are we driving awareness, engagement, knowledge, education, affinity, action?



## VISUAL BRAND ASSESSMENT

State and visualize each area.

### BRAND PERSONALITY

- How does the brand think, feel, do? Relate in human terms. It's the brand's credentials.

### ARCHETYPE

- Creator, Explorer, Caregiver, Lover, Outlaw, Regular Guy, Ruler, Jester, Hero, Magician, Innocent, Sage

### TONE

- What adjectives describe the desired feeling, personality, or approach?

### ASSETS

- What visuals are iconic to the brand?

### USP(s)

- What are the unique selling propositions as offered to the customer?

# VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK

State and visualize each area.

WHO	DESIRED THINK & FEEL	TRIGGER	IDEA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Who is our target? What are their motivations, desires?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What role can the brand play in their lives? What is the benefit to them? How does it make them feel?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What is the unique selling proposition? What can we offer them that will trigger the desired change?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What is the idea or concept that puts the 'trigger' in human terms?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How is our target portrayed?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What are the images that bring the brand to life for our target? What images represent the words that describe the desired, think &amp; feel?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What are the images that show the benefit which will trigger desired change?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How do all of the visuals come to life when shown together? Is it clear? Is it compelling? Does it represent the brand personality and tone?</li></ul>